

RED BOOK Magazine

VOLUME FORTY-FIVE
NUMBER THREE

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Edith
Wharton

in the

AUGUST issue



NO living American writer has achieved higher distinction than Edith Wharton. She is the only woman ever to receive the honorary degree Doctor of Letters from Yale; she has won the famous Pulitzer Prize for the best novel of American manners—"The Age of Innocence;" and recently she was awarded the Gold Medal of the National Institute of Arts and Letters. She is the first woman to be thus honored, and the second novelist, William Dean Howells having been the first. Inasmuch as two of the most highly praised of Mrs. Wharton's shorter novels, "The Old Maid" and "New Year's Day" first appeared in this magazine, it is with particular pleasure that the editors announce for early publication her new story:

"VELVET EAR-MUFFS"

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Thoroughness

By SARAH CONVERSE

President of the National Association of Principals of Schools for Girls

RECENTLY we have again had a distinguished visitor from across the waters. As usual he has hastened on his return to tell his compatriots what he has found in the new world.

In this case education in the United States is his theme, for the guest was Dr. Fisher, formerly minister of Education in the British cabinet. For the school buildings, for the scope of our education he has only praise. Our system of primary education meets his approval. But when Dr. Fisher considers our high schools and colleges, he condemns emphatically the lack of thoroughness in work, of accuracy and precision in method. Comparison with English schools presents our institutions in most unfavorable light, according to Dr. Fisher's observation. In the situation, however, Dr. Fisher notes one ray of light—the endowed and other qualified private secondary schools where he feels that thoroughness and precision are demanded and secured.

What our foreign critic has sensed in his brief study of our schools has long been apparent to our educational leaders—and a source of anxiety and grief to them. Our great public schools are doing marvelous work in teaching a far greater percentage of students than have ever before had an opportunity for instruction. Particularly our public high schools have thrown open their doors to the mass of our boys and girls with a generosity never before equaled.

But—and here lies the danger—by including unparalleled numbers, there has developed a system of mass education fraught with many dangers, specially the lightening of the demand for thorough, accurate work.

With the danger has come a partial solution in the growth of the qualified private school, often backed financially by groups of public-spirited citizens, determined that with the increase in the scope of our education, there shall not come decline in the quality.

In these schools the smaller numbers make possible the study of the individual pupil and his particular needs, the strengthening of the weak places and the stimulat-

ing not merely of good work but of the best work of which the student is capable. With the smaller classes and the larger proportionate number of instructors, it is feasible to demand more painstaking work and to secure the more thorough grasp that comes from genuine effort.

In a democracy the need for highly trained, unselfish leaders is too obvious to need proof. In the large high school only a small percentage of the students can have the opportunity for practice in the management of affairs. In the smaller groups most of the pupils have much opportunity for experience along executive lines and a consequent sense of responsibility for group activity.

Still a third phase of the private school is of inestimable value to the community. Education today is fully alive to the modern demand for scientific experimentation and proof. In the large, unwieldy school this experimentation is obviously difficult or impossible. A number of small experimental schools have made valuable contributions to the science of education—contributions which have been gladly accepted and used by the progressive public schools.


One other phase of these qualified private schools is of value in this rushing, material twentieth century. Curiously enough, it is in these smaller schools that there is the greatest effort to simplify the lives of the pupils. Here we find a demand for simplicity in dress, often uniformity in the interests of democracy, for freedom from the movies and distracting social activities during the school week, for drastic limitation of the use of the automobile by high school students.

The spirit back of the provision of great educational opportunities for these small groups in the private schools is not only to give generously to those pupils in these schools. The deeper basis of the work is to demonstrate by actual experience the value of such education and so to create an overwhelming demand for similar opportunities for all the children of all the people.

Sarah Converse


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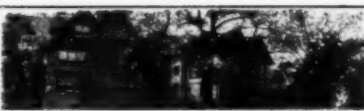
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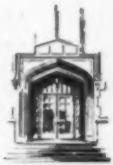
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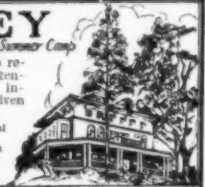
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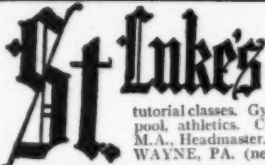
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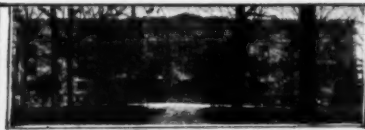
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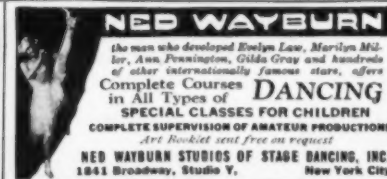
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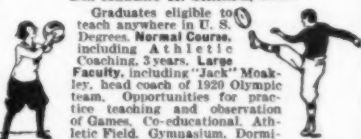
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Hidden wells of poison

Back of beauty may lurk dread disease

It's a fact: back of many a lovely smile and even gleaming teeth may be hidden wells of poison—tooth abscesses. And often unknown to the person so afflicted.

Meanwhile, these poison pockets at the base of the teeth may be gradually undermining the health.

They seep their deadly bacteria through the entire system and bring on any one of many serious and oft-times fatal illnesses.

According to eminent dental authorities, 78 out of 100 adults today have tooth abscesses: usually they do not know it themselves and very often such abscesses directly or indirectly cause many dread diseases.

Diseases that result

Among the diseases so caused are rheumatism and joint diseases; heart and kidney trouble; stomach and intestinal derangements; to say nothing of more minor disorders ranging from simple headaches to insomnia and nervous affections.

In spite of these grave dangers that lurk in tooth abscesses, relatively few

people today ever think of visiting a dentist until pain drives them there. Whereas, only a good dentist can really place you on the safe side.

Protect yourself

You are probably like most other human beings; so while at this moment you realize all these dangers you, too, will very likely put off going to your dentist.

In the meanwhile, however, you owe it to yourself to take one simple precaution: There is a dentifrice that will do very much to keep your teeth and gums in a healthy condition. Consequently, more and more dentists are today recommending Listerine Tooth Paste.

Because Listerine Tooth Paste, and this tooth paste only, contains all of the antiseptic essential oils of Listerine, the safe antiseptic. These healing ingredients help keep the gums firm and healthy and discourage the breeding of disease bacteria in the mouth.

Quick results—and safe!

This is an age when people want quick results. Listerine Tooth Paste is

so formulated that it cleans your teeth with a *minimum* of brushing, calling for much less effort than is ordinarily required.

Also, this paste cleans with absolute safety. The specially prepared cleanser it contains is just hard enough to discourage tartar formation, yet *not* hard enough to scratch or injure tooth enamel. And, of course, you know how precious tooth enamel is!

Finally, Listerine Tooth Paste is sold at a price that is fair—large tube 25 cents—the right price to pay for a good tooth paste. Try it. Enjoy really clean teeth. But don't forget the importance of seeing your dentist regularly.—Lambert Pharmacal Company, Saint Louis, U. S. A.

If your dentist has not already handed you our booklet on tooth abscesses and a sample of our dentifrice, you may have both of these by addressing a postal to the Lambert Pharmacal Co., Saint Louis.

HIDDEN WELLS OF POISON IN YOUR MOUTH?



JANE NOVAK

Film Star

Photograph by Sasha, London



DOROTHY DUNBAR

Film Star

Photograph by Edwin Sower Hesser, Hollywood



VIVIENNE OSBORNE
Film Star

Photograph by Edward Thayer Monroe, New York



DORIS KENYON
Film Star

Photograph by Nicholas Mummy, New York



MILDRED MOORE

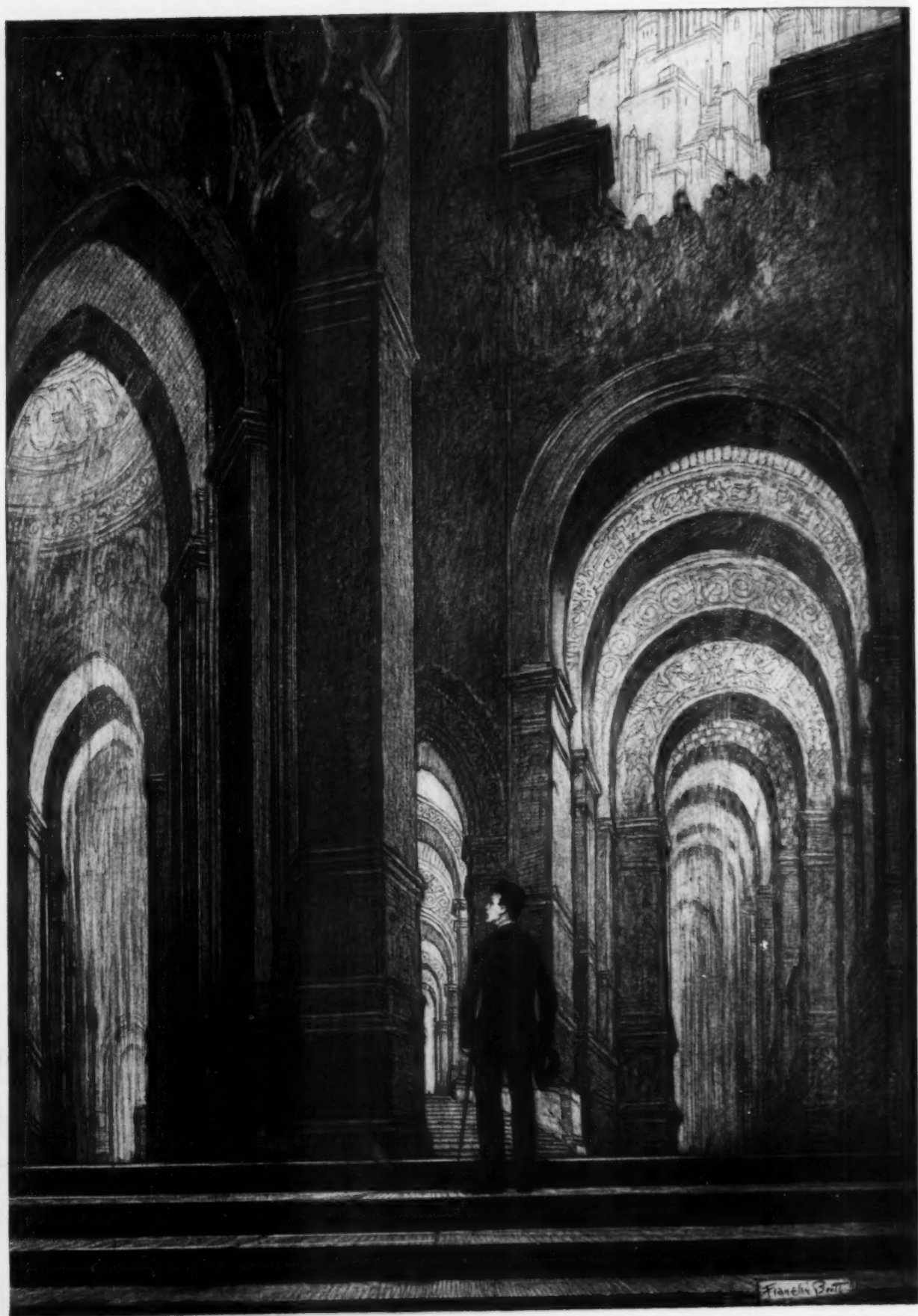
Film Star

Photograph by Edward Thayer Monson, New York



FLORENCE VIDOR
Film Star

Photograph by Henry Waxman, Hollywood



Secrets

By Angelo Patri
Decoration by Franklin Booth

MAN, beyond all other creatures of the earth, is lonely. Well hidden within him lies the secret of his being, always aching to be told, always shrinking from the telling. The human spirit has no gift of tongues. It throws out shy signals which are to be read only by the most discerning eye, and that often after all significance has vanished.

Man remains stranger to men, and very lonely. Wistfully he strives to pierce the veil that divides him from his brothers, only to find that it must be worn down by the long friction of soul and body, and that the day of its falling is still far off. He must still guard his secret.

Behind his screen lies the soul that his daily toil is creating, the elusive thing rarely glimpsed, and never known truly. None may look upon a soul in travail. It is guarded as though by the angel with the flaming sword throughout its trial. Thread by thread the protesting body yields its very substance to sustain it. Today a grain of selfishness turns into silvery radiance under the hand of the builder, and tomorrow a bit of the heart's desire becomes part of the flame of its immortality. Slowly the body fines down, and triumphantly the soul surges forward, yet ever alone and in silence.

Then there comes the hour when the last threads between body and soul hang slack. The building is almost over. Comes the instant when the guarding angel says, "Enough," and his sword cuts the last clinging threads, and the soul fares free for its passing. Often in that flashing instant there comes to you a stunning revelation, a hint of the cherished secret, a scintillating memory that thrills and uplifts you and drowns you in tears. But no words come to you or from you. There is always the touch of the inexplicable, of haunting beauty and unearthly glory.

How many times have you said afterward, "If we had only known! Why didn't he explain? Why didn't she tell us? How could we know?" as you turned over an old bundle of letters or thumbed a creased paper that hinted of long worn sorrows and pressing burdens hidden for a lifetime! "We'd have felt so different. We'd have done so much better. We would have been kinder."

The soul cannot explain. It must be interpreted. The heart knoweth its own bitterness, but it cannot utter it so that you can understand. You never know the real story, because nobody is even at liberty to tell it. The core of the hurt was never brought out for your inspection; the yearning that tore the body apart and turned into the shining radiance of the soul, cramped the tongue to silence.

Who, then, are we to judge one another? Who is to say he should have done this or that or the other? Only when all the story is told can the judgment be rendered, and a soul speaks only to God who made it. If, then, there is nothing of kindness we can murmur, nothing of love or comfort or understanding that we can bestow, suppose we pass by in silence, remembering that man is very lonely and bears his soul in sorrow.



Neighborly

by Edgar A. Guest

Not great, but neighborly I'd be,
With eyes that are awake to see
The tender little lines of care
Upon the faces everywhere—
With wisdom that can understand
From just the pressure of a hand,
Or just a word, voiced soft and low,
Whether the heart be glad or no.

Along my little path I ask
Full strength to meet my daily task,
And then this knowledge: that there beat
No truer hearts than those I meet;
That all that life has power to give
Lies round about me where I live;
That rich or poor, unto the end,
Or high or low, a friend's a friend!

Not far I'd travel. There's no need!
Here I can do the kindly deed.
Here I can laugh and live and learn.
Here all the lights as brightly burn
As those which shine on haunts afar.
Here troops of merry children are,
Grown men and women good to know.
What more can distant scenes bestow?

Not great, but neighborly I'd be.
Would better know the ones I see
From day to day, and better share
Their fleeting joys and times of care.
I'd speak with deeper meaning, too,
The morning's greeting: "How d'you do!"
And reap from life as much of love
As those who reach the heights above.

Decoration
by
Angus
MacDonall





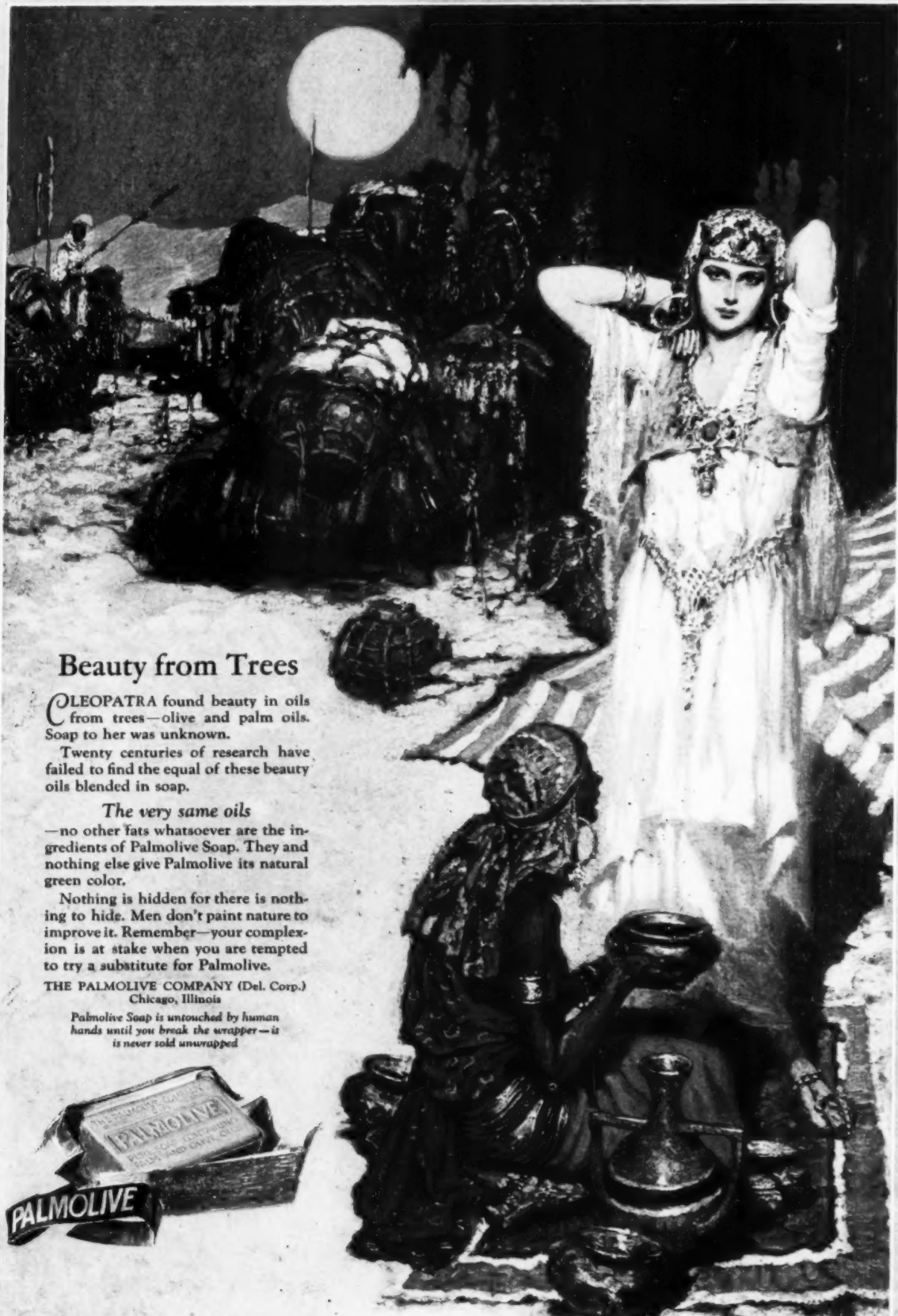
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Beauty from Trees

CLEOPATRA found beauty in oils from trees—olive and palm oils. Soap to her was unknown.

Twenty centuries of research have failed to find the equal of these beauty oils blended in soap.

The very same oils

—no other fats whatsoever are the ingredients of Palmolive Soap. They and nothing else give Palmolive its natural green color.

Nothing is hidden for there is nothing to hide. Men don't paint nature to improve it. Remember—your complexion is at stake when you are tempted to try a substitute for Palmolive.

THE PALMOLIVE COMPANY (Del. Corp.)
Chicago, Illinois

Palmolive Soap is untouched by human hands until you break the wrapper—it is never sold unwrapped



A COMMON-SENSE EDITORIAL

By BRUCE BARTON

Dare to Be a Daniel

YEARS ago when I was selling aluminum cooking utensils from door to door, I called at a certain house and sold a man two saucepans.

In preparing to write down the order, I moistened the end of the pencil with the tip of my tongue.

"Stop!" cried the customer in solemn tones. "Don't you know that moistening a lead pencil merely hardens the lead, and makes writing more difficult? Don't you know that it is a careless and unhealthy habit anyway?"

Whereupon he delivered a half-hour lecture which had obviously been used on many people before. It spoiled my afternoon.

As I went away, I thought to myself: "This old codger has picked out the matter of moistening lead pencils as his particular conviction. In defense of that faith he will sacrifice all friendship, destroy all social amenities and dare all rebukes. He goes through life like a detective, always hoping to catch some one in the act. What a trivial fault he has selected to crusade against, and how many hundreds of people he has probably made uncomfortable!"

Another day I breakfasted with a man who ordered eggs boiled *two minutes and a half*.

When the eggs were delivered, he ex-

ploded. These were not what he had ordered, he cried. They might be three-minute eggs or two-minute eggs, but he wanted two-and-a-half-minute eggs.

He travels constantly and lives most of his time in hotels. And because no waiter's idea of time as applied to eggs agrees exactly with his own, he starts every morning with a fight.

Uncle Joe Cannon said once: "Every time I run for Congress, there is an old fellow in my district who publishes a paper against me. It is headed: 'One with God Is a Majority.' He never has any doubt," said Joe, "as to who is *the one*."

In Sunday school we used to sing:

Dare to be a Daniel;
Dare to stand alone;
Dare to have a purpose firm
And dare to make it known.

The important thing about being a Daniel is to know when to be one, and on what issue. Convictions are splendid when they relate to important matters; they are a public nuisance when they provoke a row over a petty detail.

On a couple of matters affecting my family or the principles of business, I dare to be a Daniel. But not on whether a lead pencil should be moistened—or a half-minute difference in eggs.



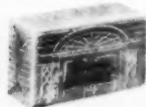
*The scientific basis
for the use of
SOAP*

The following set of principles has been endorsed by 1169 physicians of highest standing and is offered as an authoritative guide to women in their use of soap for the skin:

- 1 The function of soap for the skin is to cleanse, not to cure or transform.
- 2 Soap performs a very useful function for normal skins by keeping the skin clean.
- 3 If there is any disease of the skin which soap irritates, a physician should be seen.
- 4 To be suitable for general daily use, a soap should be pure, mild and neutral.
- 5 If the medicinal content of a soap is sufficient to have an effect upon the skin, the soap should be used only upon the advice of a physician.
- 6 In all cases of real trouble, a physician's advice should be obtained before treatment is attempted.

NEW SIZE!

Guest IVORY 5c



What can soap do for your skin?

The specialist's answer is simple

THE scientist—the dermatologist, the reputable physician, the chemist—is the only authority worth listening to on the care of your skin, whether he is talking about cosmetics or treatments or soap.

Soap, for instance, is an exceedingly important factor in the care of your skin. Medical authorities say you can't get hygienically clean without it.

On the other hand, these same authorities will tell you that soap cannot cure your skin, nor "nourish" it, nor render it beautiful except as it makes it clean—choose your soap, not to achieve miracles, but to cleanse your skin safely. Choose it, not to "oil" your skin, for when oils are mixed with other ingredients to make soap, they cease to be oils and become soap—and soap's function is to cleanse.

When you buy soap for your complexion, buy a pure, mild, neutral soap.

If you choose Ivory, you have as fine a soap as can be made, regardless of price. Ivory is pure, gentle, safe. It contains no medicaments or coloring matter or strong perfume. It renders with fine distinction every service you can get from any soap. Doctor after doctor has told us, "I use Ivory myself. My family use it. I recommend it unhesitatingly to my patients."

There is no safer, more effective or more pleasant treatment for your skin than this: Bathe your face once or twice a day with warm water and Ivory Soap. Follow this with a thorough rinsing and a dash of cold water. Dry carefully, and, if you like, gently rub in a little pure cold cream. If you do this, and maintain good health, you will seldom have to worry about your complexion.

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The RED BOOK Magazine

July 1925 • Volume XLV • Number 3

KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN, *Editor*

EDGAR Sisson, *Associate Editor*

Here begins a
tempestuous tale of love
and adventure on the
high seas, blown hither
and yon by the
four winds
of wonder.

By

Harold
Mac Grath



Said Thorndent:
"Would you marry
a man who is a
fool and a saint?"

Bitter Apples

Illustrated by Lester Ralph

LIVING in a house set in a wonderful garden, surrounded by art treasures collected on many far adventurings, it is small wonder that Harold Mac Grath can write beautifully. The fact is, however, that the writing is done in a tiny bare room, equipped with a kitchen table and one chair, with a Pekinese pup curled up asleep around the inkwell. "The best penwiper I ever had," says Mr. Mac Grath.

WYNCOTE felt that he was being watched; the sensation was inexplicable, beyond analysis. It puzzled him, for there was no tangible cause. Why should anyone watch him? The feeling was not continuous; sometimes two or three days would pass without his subconsciousness striking the alarm. On the street, at home, the sensation would come upon him unexpectedly. Once he had rushed out of the library into the miniature garden, positive that some one had been staring at him through the window; but he had found the garden empty. The sensation never induced fear. It did, however, rouse in him the same quality of annoyance caused by some one peering over his shoulder

Now in the circle appeared a violinist, then a girl dressed in white. Wyncote drew in his breath. She was the girl of the lemon verbena!

to see what he was reading or writing.

He had enacted many little tricks to lure the watcher—if there really was one—into the open; and so far he had failed. Had he been in the habit of carrying large sums of money, this fact would have accounted for the notion; but he never carried sums beyond his immediate needs.

That thing called prescience, that intangible something which abides in all human beings, actively or somnolently, was telling him that eyes were watching him. It was as persistent as it was absurd. He was confused because the sensation was without reason. No matter from what angle, in the analytical sense, he approached this feeling, he could not project it against a background of reason.

Perhaps the whole thing was due to the mental upheaval to which he had recently been subjected. He had lost some fine illusions. He knew that an illusion was an idea, rooted in the soul, and that not one could be violently plucked forth without irreparable damage. Yesterday he had had faith in all things; today, in almost nothing; and tomorrow he would lose the few illusions he had left.

His mind had been free enough upon leaving the house this afternoon. Yet here, within a block of the offices of Thornden and Mills, his attorneys, the sensation returned. What was this watcher trying to communicate to his mind? He hurried on and entered the building. As he reached the marble lobby, he turned, perhaps belligerently. Men and women passed; lifts flew up and down; but no man or woman looked covertly into his face.

Standing before the directory tablet was a young woman. He could not see her face. She was dressed in black, but the cut of her gown was fashionable and her feet were trimly shod. Had she preceded him or had she followed him into the lobby? He could not remember. The young woman studied the list of names, jotted down something on a slip of paper, turned and walked briskly toward the street. He caught the profile as she passed—very attractive. She passed close enough to leave the vague essence of some perfume. Presently he recollected what it was: lemon verbena.

Depressed, he moved slowly to one of the lifts. This depression was due to the poignant knowledge that he was now cut away from the companionship of the young women he knew, the good young women. He was Oliver Wyncote's son, a social pariah.

Perhaps if he left town for the woods and stalked game for a



week, this nonsense about being watched would clear out of his head. Perhaps the loose psychology of his mental state made him open to purely fanciful notions. It might be that he was ill and was not aware of it, with a nervous breakdown in the offing.

He entered the main office of Thornden and Mills and asked for Mr. Thornden. He was pleasantly informed by the telephone girl that Mr. Thornden was expecting him.

Wyncote had occasionally heard of Thornden through the agency of his father's lapses into reminiscence. The two had gone to the same university. It now struck him as odd that the lawyer had never visited the house. Had his father drawn the line, or had Thornden drawn it? Three weeks gone, he had met Thornden for the first time, and liked him. Why had he never been up to the house?

"Well, young man," greeted the attorney, "take a chair and tell me what's on your mind this fine afternoon."

"Do you call that fine?" asked Wyncote, gesturing toward the drab November sky. "Looks like snow or rain. Mr. Thornden, I have come to an unalterable decision."

"Ah! Will you smoke?"

"No, thanks. My father left me three millions in trust. So long as I live, I am to have the income. At my death, this income goes to four orphan asylums."



"Correct," said Thornden, lighting a cigar.

He knew precisely what was going on in the young man's mind, and he was nervous enough to feel the need of tobacco. A fine boy, and what a grueling mess he was in, through no fault of his own! The whole business was the queerest he had touched in thirty years of practice.

"The house in town," went on Wyncote, "the Adirondack camp, and the Florida bungalow are mine to do with as I please."

"Absolutely."

"You and Father went to college together."

"Yes."

"How is it you have never entered the house?"

Thornden contemplated the end of his cigar for a moment. "College chums drift apart when they reach manhood. We lived in different worlds, my boy. I had not seen Oliver in years till he came in and had me draw up his will. I handle nothing but estates. It makes me prosperous but obscure. . . . You have come into this office to do something very quixotic, and I'm going to admire you for it. Tell me."

"Well, sir, it strikes me that my father's selection of orphan asylums to leave his money to is a perfectly just arrangement; for no doubt many orphans of his making are in those institutions."

Thornden shook his head. He did not like this style of irony in so young a man.

"Your father is dead," he said gently.

"But all of us who die leave something behind, for good or for evil."

"It looks to me as if he had tried to undo some of the damage."

"Not for the orphans of his making, but for orphans that come along after I'm dead."

"You were his son; he had to do something for you."

"Yes. But if I touch this money, I shall always be the pariah his conduct makes me. I should always feel that my—erstwhile friends were just in cutting me on the street."

"Have they done that?"

"Some; shortly all of them will. What I am going to do I want kept out of the newspapers. My father is dead; so I shall not add to the dishonor of his ashes by letting the public know that I have repudiated my inheritance. I know down in my soul that if I accepted this income, I should go straight to hell with it. Money, all that I wanted? No, thank you. There is some manhood left in me, enough to work out a destiny as honorable as yours. A hundred and eighty thousand a year would rob me of all initiative; and I must have that to save myself. I am my father's son, and I know it."

"You are your mother's son too, boy. Keep close to that. You are bitter now. This bitterness will die away as you grow older."

Wyncote ignored this. "I wish to deed the income to the asylums forthwith. I wish to sell the entire estate and have that sum also turned over to the asylums. I am not without resources. My mother's estate, which I inherited, leaves me enough for normal comforts, but not enough to give rein to any wild impulses. I can deed away a fortune, but I cannot deed away my blood."

"Your imagination is running away with you. You've been a decent young man till now. What made you so? Your father was generous. Wouldn't this so-called bad blood have shown up long ago? What held you in? Your natural cleanness. Don't talk nonsense. Your notion in deeding away this fortune shows proper instincts. Let them ride, young man, let them ride."

The sublime comedy of youth! he thought. Today the boy was as dourly grim as a Wesley, a bitter moralist, a stern judge; but tomorrow he would wonder who the pretty girl was across the street. Evolution was at once a dreadful and a kindly thing; what was tragedy today became comedy tomorrow.

"Can you make out the papers so that I can sign them at once?" asked Wyncote.

"Yes. I wonder if you have the least notion how well your father understood you?"

"Understood me? How could he?" cried the son bitterly.

"The day he signed the will he prophesied you'd do exactly this. I didn't understand then, and was puzzled. He gave me a letter to be given you against this day. Perhaps that will explain away some of your mystification."

"Mr. Thornden, is there any reason why I should be covertly watched?"

"Watched? What for? What do you mean?"

"Well, time after time the notion comes to me that some one is watching me. Sounds like nonsense, since I haven't actually caught anyone watching me. Did my father have any enemies?"

"As Wyncote? I don't believe so. But as 'Jarvis,' I have no opinion to offer. The disclosure was as thundering a surprise to me as it was to you. His official attorneys—" Thornden paused, finding himself in difficulty.

"—Who kept him out of prison," said Wyncote, ironically finishing the attorney's unspoken thought. "They would know; but I shall not seek information from them."

"That would be my advice. Nothing will change your mind about this transfer?"

"My resolution is fixed."

"Just a moment, then." Thornden wrote on a tablet his instructions to his stenographer and then summoned her. "At once, Miss Edgwood." When she was gone, Thornden turned again to his client. "No; I

shouldn't dig up anything more. What's the use? The situation could not be helped by it. As 'Jarvis' your father ran illegal bucket-shops all over the country and dealt in bogus securities. The shock of the disclosure broke his heart, actually; and he died before they could get him to a hospital. Do you know what his last words were?"

"Yes: 'It is best.' Had he lived, he would have gone to prison."

"Hasn't it struck you that his last words were in thought of you? That by dying he could save you some misery?"



"You took a solemn oath in a solemn hour," Joseph reminded her. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth!"

"You are defending him?"—astonished.

"The dead are always defensible."

"But memory remains to the living. How about the women, here, there, everywhere, even while my mother lived? If I could only give this money back to the poor fools who lost it! Well, I can give it to their orphans."

"You are hard."

"It is easy for you to say that, who sit calmly outside this blackness. When you were my age, you saw your goal clearly. I see nothing forward except a gamut of rebuffs, cold-shoulders,

deeply interested in you I know. He kept close tabs on you. You were a pretty decent boy. At college you had an occasional bender after the football season. You had an affair with a chorus-girl. Your father did not interfere, because he learned that she wasn't a gold-digger. Just human boy stuff, nothing that would particularly shock old Saint Peter. I am recounting the things he told me. I'll get the letter."

Wyncote received and put the letter unopened into his pocket. "Tell me more about my father."

Thornden smoked for a while.

"There is in every one of us a *Jekyll* and a *Hyde*. Your father used to show something of this at college. He would fight a man twice as big for being cruel to a horse or a dog—and crib during examinations. He would go through fire and water for a friend—and steal that friend's sweetheart. That kind! But always lovable and charming. What gets into human beings? I don't know. The stock-market developed the *Hyde*; but there was still enough *Jekyll* to want to keep the truth from you."

"Did you both know Mother at the same time?"

"Yes." Thornden stared at his cigar.

But Wyncote understood. His mother had been loved by this man; and perhaps he had lacked the charm to hold her.

"Do you want my advice?" asked Thornden presently.

"Yes."

"Very good. If you hadn't come on your own, I'd have sent for you. I'm obscure, but for all that, I have influence; I can get things done that most could not. I have here a passport, lacking only your signature and photo. You are therein known as John Carey. To certain men in power I have frankly explained your difficulties; hence a passport illegal in three spots only."

"A passport for me? Why?"—puzzled.

"Your father used to own *The Petrel*. They've changed her name to *The Four Winds*. They are sending her on a cruise around the world—four months. When you return, New York will have something else to talk about. Your cabin will be held for you up to six hours before sailing. Here's the steamship company's propaganda. Get away for a while, among people you don't know. New scenes and new faces. I'll handle your estate. How about the pictures and furnishings?"

"Every stick and stone—in fact, everything," replied Wyncote. "I'll take care of it all. In four months you'll be all over this; the brooding will be gone."

"It's pretty sudden. I shouldn't have thought of it. And nothing could be better for me. The old *Petrel*! Sir, it's very kind of you, and I'm grateful."

"You'll go?"

"John Carey will go."

"Bully!"

The deed was signed and witnessed; and Wyncote went his



scornful glances. No matter where I go, I shall be rediscovered continually." Wyncote bowed his head.

"Poor boy, you must not take it so. I too have had my blows; but here I am, in a haven of serenity, where you shall one day come. You are hurt, but that will heal."

"What kind of a man was my father when you knew him?"

"Lovable, whimsical, charming. We were roommates."

"Lovable? Why didn't he let me know it? He was always cold and aloof."

"Perhaps that too will be explained in his letter. That he was

way, with a lighter step, a definite purpose in his mind. There was warmth, too. He wasn't utterly alone; he had a friend—in the man who had loved his mother. . . .

Said Thornden to his stenographer: "Miss Edgwood, would you give up a yearly income of a hundred and eighty thousand because your father happened to be named Jarvis?"

"Mr. Wyncote is either a fool or a saint."

"He's a little of both, a little of both, with a dash of the Old Nick in between. Would you marry a man who is a fool and a saint?"

"With a little devil in between? He'd be very attractive."

"How would you like to take a trip around the world?"

"As a nurse to Mr. Wyncote?" The young woman laughed.

"No, thanks. I'm thirty-two."

"You don't look it."

"And I don't feel it. But in two years I'd be sixty and he still in the twenties. Besides, I've a notion to pick my own man when the time comes."

"May he never come!"

Miss Edgwood laughed, and departed to her den.

Chapter Two

IN the old residential district of New York, in an apartment consisting of kitchenette and bedroom, two persons were in earnest conversation. The one in possession of the apartment was also in command of the conversation. She was a young woman, dressed in black. Warm beauty was hers. Black hair, lambent gray eyes, honey-colored skin and red lips made a striking combination, arresting and unusual. Her visitor was an elderly man, swart of skin, and given to quick gestures.

"Marchesa—" he began.

She interrupted him. "How many times must I tell you that I am not? I was born in this country; my mother was an American, and so am I." She spoke vigorously.

"Your father—"

"Was an American by adoption, who never spoke Italian unless he had to. I was taught English before I was taught Italian. And my mother taught me that because she loved my father."

"Blood is blood. A hundred years from now your son will be *Marchese*. My great-grandfather was your great-grandfather's gardener in Sicily. Words cannot change birth."

"Have your way, then; but never address me by the title. From my point of view I have none. I am an American."

The man smiled. He knew what he knew. At this moment she was true Sicilian, even if she refused to admit it. But to see her in this shabby room! A violent thought corrugated the veins in his throat.

"I know you, Joseph," she said. "You would creep up behind him in the dark. Kill him before he has suffered? No, no!"

"Your passion is cold."

"But it thinks. Kill him, yes; but a little at a time, for years. To break his courage, to break his heart—as mine is broken. If you harm a hair of his head till I am done with him, I shall curse you!"

"I am your servant."

"Obey me, then, without question."

"And your ambition? You have a voice like the nightingale."

"That must wait."

"To kill him a little at a time," mused the man. "*Brava!* My mind is not so swift as yours. I begin to see. But you, singing in a restaurant!"

"It is all a part of my plans. Besides, with this money I can support myself. Mark me, he will come to that restaurant. I let him see my face this afternoon, and he will remember."

The youth and beauty of her! She would never fade; the Northern blood in her would stay that quick ripening native to the race to which she truly belonged. She was twenty; yet her body was as lithe and beautiful as a fawn's. It would be useless to urge her to accept his notion. This was an affair for hot blood, not calculation. Then too, the boy was handsome in his cold Northern way. Joseph sighed and rose.

"Each morning," he said, "you will receive an account of his movements the day before. He feels us already."

"I saw that this afternoon."

"Your wish is to meet him in a way that will excite his imagination."

"Am I beautiful, Joseph?"

"Ah, *cara mia!*"

"Am I not desirable?"

"You alarm me!"

"Rest easy. I know how to take care of myself. Go now; and have no fears."

He kissed both her hands with reverent devotion. "He shall not escape you. To kill him a little at a time!" Joseph laughed grimly. "The stiletto would be merciful. God guard you!"

Alone, she sat before the dressing-mirror and somberly studied her reflection. There was something in her expression that suggested Allori's *Judith*.

MEANWHILE Wyncote entered the subway for uptown. Care fully he picked out each face and studied it. Here in a crowded car he knew that the sensation of being watched would not register; nevertheless, human faces always interested him, for some day he hoped to write. He was always building character out of what he saw in each face. The man opposite was a southern Italian, short and stocky. He was studying the advertisements with childish interest. The shopgirl next to the Italian was reading a paper-covered novel, and from time to time she giggled aloud. Dull faces, sad, animated, self-satisfied, worried; nearly all the ordinary human emotions were visible. The study became so interesting that he forgot himself and almost missed his station.

On the street again, he remembered his father's letter. Should he read it? Wouldn't it tear him to pieces if he did? Thornden had called him lovable and charming; would not the letter contain something of this, reach in and give one more twist to his heart? And yet he must read it, in justice to the man who had generously fed and clothed and educated him.

To go away somewhere, to strike the dust of New York from his heels! Thornden's suggestion was good; he would act upon it. He was not in love; he had that on the credit side of the ledger; so there would be no one to leave behind.

The pleasant groove he had walked in all these years—the ugly and the sordid on the other side of the hedge—and *presto!* here they were, nudging his elbows from all sides, himself foundering in bog! Well, out of the debacle he had plucked a single thing—his self-respect. He himself could look all men serenely in the eye, no matter what they thought or said.

Arriving home, he called in the servants and notified them that after Sunday their services would no longer be required. They would, however, receive the best of recommendations and three months' wages. Having struck this blow—for they were all old servitors of whom he was fond—he went into the library to figure out just exactly what were his belongings in this house. Everything else should go under the hammer. This inventory required but half an hour to jot down.

Then he took out his father's letter and balanced it thoughtfully on a palm. Somehow he could not read it just now. He decided to take it to bed with him, read it and sleep on it. Besides, he had a notion that he would go downtown after dinner. If he remained in the house it would be only to mope. He felt the need of light, color, movement. He put the letter back into his pocket and sought his pipe.

—And came upon the steamship propaganda Thornden had given him. He filled and lit his pipe and inspected the florid booklet. A trip around the world in the old *Petrel*, rechristened *The Four Winds*—it began to intrigue him. After six years there would not be a soul left of the old crew. Thousands of miles between him and the theater of his unhappiness, where he would be given leisure to readjust himself, beyond the reach of familiar eyes. If he remained in New York, he would find himself in a condition similar to that of an animal in the zoo.

"Ladies and gentlemen, you see in this cage the offspring of Oliver Wyncote, alias Jarvis, the swindling bucket-shop man. He looks peaceful, but don't feed him."

THE booklet contained the usual thing about the selectness of the passenger-list—always good bait for the social climber and the newly rich. . . . They had rebuilt her from the main-deck, evidently, cutting the roomy cabins into pairs. Her deckhouses were all new. But for the lurch of her bow and the spiky bowsprit, she would have had the appearance of a liner in miniature.

He could recall only vaguely how his father had come into possession of the so-called yacht. She had originally been built for summer passenger trade between New York and the New England coast resorts, and was registered as a common-carrier. She was copied almost line for line from the royal yacht *Alexandra*, except that there was more beam and length to accommodate her additional tonnage. A sleek, smart bird of the sea, like her own name, at home in any weather, upon any sea. Few millionaires



A hypnotic pause, and then the door closed. But Wyncote knew that he had seen Belinda White!

would dare commission such a ship for pleasure; she had been sent forth to earn her keep. Wyncote remembered that his father had taken her off the hands of the shipbuilders just before they had gone into bankruptcy. Shady collusion, probably, between his father and the builders. Perhaps he had paid nothing for the boat, had just kept her out of the receiver's clutch; no doubt something like that. Even then, his father had had to give her up eventually because she had been too dear for his purse.

As he read on, he was pleasurably arrested by the explanation as to the rechristening. A line from an old Chinese poem was given the credit. "The Four Winds of Wonder." The poem aroused his literary instincts; it had music of a haunting and sonorous quality, and he set himself to memorizing one stanza:

The North Wind shall bring you strangers and hate,
And the Unknown Menace that strikes from behind.
The East Wind shall bring you ships and war and pestilence;
And the Innocent shall eat of Bitter Apples.
The West Wind shall bring you harvest and treasure,
And cannot fill the Empty Heart.
But the South Wind shall come with the Essence of Spices,
And you shall know of Lotus and Love.

"And the innocent shall eat of bitter apples," he mused. And how bitter the apples were! For he was eating of them; Fate had rammed them into his mouth.

The four winds of wonder, that was to say, of Fate—one of which was kind. Lotus and love: would he ever know that? Well, the mark of the man would be his ingenuity in meeting and warding off the malignancy of the three winds in his search for the fourth.

For after all, what human being lived who did not seek persistently for love?—who would not suffer the tortures of the damned for the manna of a kiss? Wise old Chinaman, who knew everything, but clothed his wisdom in tuneful allegories! The blows of Fate: not to know whence the blow shall come, that there is one toward, and what it shall be like, and why it should be at all! For himself, the supreme blow had fallen; those that followed wouldn't have the power to hurt him much.

Lotus and love. He leaned back dreamily. Essence of spices—lemon verbena. What a beautiful profile the girl in black had! Millions and millions of them, and all with their minds locked up, giving a little here, a little there, but always keeping back the secret. As he would hold back his own, forever! Queer thought: he could not empty his mind if he tried; there would always remain a residuum—secrets.

Suddenly his chair came down. He sprang to his feet and rushed from the library to the rear hall, thence into the small garden. This time there was no doubt; he had seen a face just beyond the window.

At the rear of the garden there was a (Continued on page 124)

There was a whizz
by my ear, and a
thud, and a knife
deep in the panel.
The surprise gave
Manana a chance
to slip away.



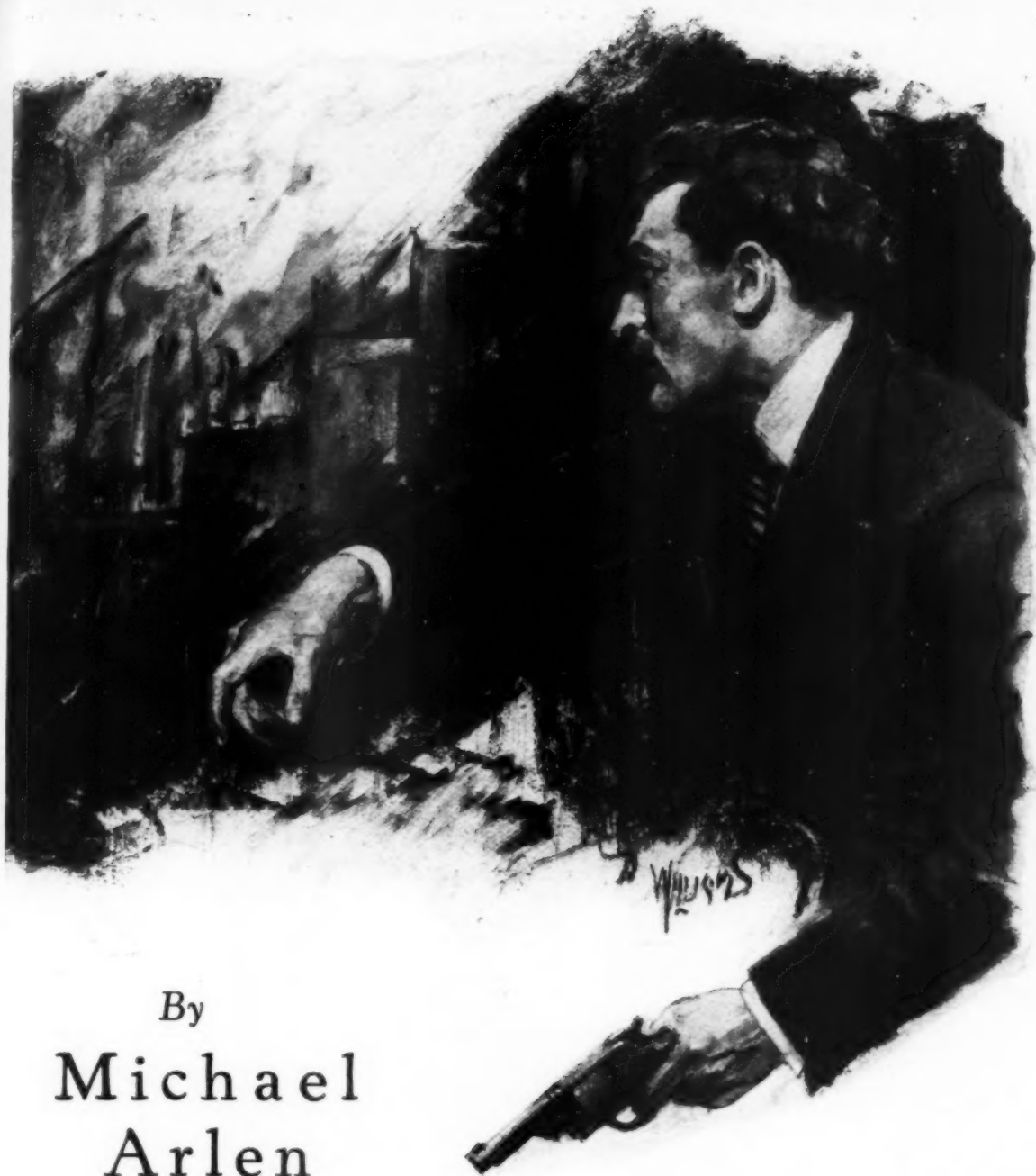
The Knife Thrower

Illustrated by C. D. Williams

MICHAEL ARLEN is the most popular writer of English fiction in the world today. Having demonstrated his great talent in five books, he turned one of them, "The Green Hat," into a play. It was the outstanding success of the spring season. Mr. Arlen's next adventure will be in the films. He will write his pieces directly for the screen in California next fall. And in the meantime, here is one of the greatest of all his stories.

THIS is the tale of the late Rear Admiral Sir Charles Fasset-Faith, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. This distinguished torpedo officer was advanced to flag rank only last June, having previously been for two years commodore of the first class commanding the — Fleet. Throughout the war he was attached to the submarine service; and for the vigilance and fearlessness of his command, his name came to be much on men's lips. His early death, at the age of forty-five, will be regretted by all who knew him. He never married This is also the tale of Aram Valarian the Armenian, and of Manana Gulest, his love-lady.

One summer evening a gentleman emerged from the Celibates Club in Hamilton Place, and not instantly descending the few broad steps to the pavement, stood awhile between the two ancient brown columns of the portico. The half of a cigar was restlessly screwed into the corner of his mouth in a manner that consorted quite oddly with his uneager English eye, and with the gentleman's high carriage might have reminded a romantic observer of the president of the Suicide Club. His silk hat, however (for he was habited for the evening), was situated on his head with that exact sobriety which would seem to rebuke the more familiar relations customary between desperate gentlemen and their hats; and he appeared, at his station at the head of the broad steps, to be lost in idle contemplation. The



By
**Michael
 Arlen**

Admiral made thus a notable mark for any passing stranger with a nice eye for distinction. Unusually tall for a sailor, and of very powerful build, his complexion was as though forged—it is the exact word—of the very alchemy of vengeful suns and violent winds: his pale dry eyes, which would always be decidedly the dryest things in a maelstrom, in their leisure assumed that kindly absent look which is the pleasant mark of Englishmen who walk in iron upon the sea.

The hour was about ten o'clock, and the traffic by the corner of Hamilton Place and Piccadilly marched by without hindrance. The din of horns and wheels and engines, charmed as though by the grace of the limpid night, swept by inattentive ears as easily as the echoes of falling water in a distant cavern. The omnibuses to Victoria and to the Marble Arch trumpeted proudly round the corner where by day they must pant for passage in a heavy block. Limousines and landaulettes shone and passed silently, while the very taxies, in the exaltation of moderate speed, seemed almost to be forgetting their humble places in the hierarchy of the road. Every now and then figures scuttled across the road with anxious, jerking movements.

"A fine night!" sighed the commissioner of the Celibates Club. A lean, lined face he had, and the fragment of a sergeant-major's bitterly resigned smile still as though embedded in the fold of each line. "A taxi, Sir Charles?"

The Admiral cleared his throat and aimed the remnant of his cigar into the gutter. "Thanks, Hunt; I think I'll walk. Yes, a fine night."

Omnibus after omnibus tore down the small broad slope from Park Lane which is called Hamilton Place, and galloped gayly across the pleasance of Hyde Park Corner.

"They *do* speed up at night!" sighed the commissioner.

"Don't they! But see there, Hunt!" Sir Charles was waving his cane toward the opposite side of the road, toward the corner by the massive Argentine Club. "See that man?"

The commissioner followed the direction of the cane.

"That constable, Sir Charles?"

"No, no! *That* man."

The commissioner, mistrustful of his ancient eyes, peered through the clear night. He sighed: "Somehow, Sir Charles, I can't see one just there."

The Admiral thoughtfully took another cigar from his case. "Never mind, Hunt. Just give me a light, will you?"

But as he made to walk down Piccadilly, to join in a rubber at his other club in St. James' Street, Sir Charles did not let the dark, lean young man on the other side of the road pass out of the corner of his eye. The young man crossed the road. Our gentleman walked on, and once in Piccadilly, walked at a good pace. The Piccadilly scene was seldom crowded between ten and eleven: cinema-theaters, music-halls and playhouses held the world's attention, while the night was not yet deep enough for the dim parade of the world's wreckage. Sir Charles would always, at about this hour, take a little exercise between his clubs in Hamilton Place and St. James'. He had passed the opening of Half-Moon Street before the young man caught up with his shoulder. Sir Charles walked on without concerning himself to look round at the dark, handsome face. Handsome as a black archangel was Aram Valarian the Armenian, and it was as a black archangel that the looks of Aram Valarian impressed Sir Charles. It was altogether a too fanciful business for the Admiral's taste; but he had originally let the thing, he'd had to admit often, run away with him.

"Well?" he suddenly smiled over his shoulder.

Aram Valarian did not smile. He said gravely: "When I first saw you, Sir Charles, I thought you were only a fool. But I am not sure now. You show a resignation toward Fate unusual in your skeptical countrymen. It is skepticism that makes men dull, resignation that makes men interesting. It is a dull mind that believes in nothing; it is an interesting mind that expects nothing and waits for the worst. Your waiting shall be rewarded, Sir Charles."

The Admiral walked on with a grim smile. He was growing used to this—even to this! They passed beneath the bitter walls of what was once Devonshire House. The young Armenian said softly: "You have a broad back, Sir Charles. It is a fine mark for a well-thrown knife. Have I not always said so!"

Our gentleman swung round on the lean young man. A few yards from them a policeman was having words with the commissionaire of the Berkeley Restaurant about a car that had been left standing too long by the curb. It was Aram Valarian who was smiling now. Sir Charles said sternly:

"Am I to understand that you are trying to frighten me with this ridiculous persecution? And what, Mr. Valarian, is to prevent me from giving you in charge to that policeman? You are, I think, wanted for murder."

Aram Valarian's queer black eyes seemed to shine with mockery. "There's nothing in the world to prevent you, Sir Charles, except that any policeman would think you mad for asking him to arrest air. Not, as you suggest, that he wouldn't be pleased to catch the Prince of the Armenians in the ordinary way. May I offer you a light for that cigar?"

And as Sir Charles lit his cigar from the match held out to him, he was not surprised to find himself looking into the ancient eyes of Hunt, the commissionaire outside his club in Hamilton Place. His walk up Piccadilly, his talk with the young Armenian, had taken no longer than it takes to light a cigar. This was the third time within a fortnight that the Admiral had been privileged to see his old enemy, to walk with him and talk with him; and his awakening had each time been to find that not more than a couple of seconds had passed, and that he had never moved from his station.

Sir Charles abruptly reentered the club, and in the smoking-room addressed himself to his old friend Hilary Townshend. "Hilary," said he, "I have a tale to tell you. You will listen, please. It is very fanciful, and you will dislike it. I dislike it for the same reason. But I want you, my oldest friend, to know certain facts in case anything happens to me in the course of the next few days—or nights. In my life, as you know, I haven't had many dealings with the grotesque. But the grotesque seems lately to desire the very closest connection with me. It began two years ago when I officiously tried to be of some service to a young Armenian woman called Manana Gulest. God help me, I thought I was acting for the best."

There follows the tale told by Sir Charles Fasset-Faith to Mr. Townshend.

ABOUT two years ago (said the Admiral), during one of my leaves in London, young Mrs. Harpenden persuaded me to go down with her to a club of some sort she was helping to run down in the East End. There were then, and for all I know there are now, a number of pretty young women and quite sound young men doing their intelligent best to placate God for the sins of

their Victorian fathers by making life in the East End as tolerable as possible. Perhaps they were even doing some good; and I didn't mind stretching a point to help young Napier and Venice Harpenden. The idea was that I should give the young devils a rough lecture on the Navy in general and the Jutland fight in particular—that kind of thing. So there I stood yapping away, surrounded by a crowd of amiable and attentive young men and women. In a room near by, poor Napier was trying to get away with only one black eye from a hefty young navy to whom he was supposed to be teaching boxing. Across a counter in a far corner Venice was handing out cups of perfectly revolting coffee. She had all the bloods at her call that night, had Venice. In one corner George Tarlyon was teaching a crowd jujitsu, and in another Hugo Cypress was playing checkers with a Boy Scout—it did one good to see him. And there, in the middle of all that, was the old mug roaring away about the silent Navy.

I WAS just getting settled down and raising laughs with the usual Jack Tar rubbish when—well, there they were, a pair of them, quite plainly laughing at me. Not with me, mark you! You'll understand that it put me off my stroke. I was annoyed. And the barefaced way that young Armenian was laughing at me was infectious, and before long he'd have, I thought, the whole lot laughing at me. However, I did my level best to go on without looking at them; but that wasn't so easy, as they were bang in front of me, three or four rows back.

I'd spotted the young man first. He was the one making the jokes and leading the laugh, while the girl only followed suit. Both Armenians, obviously, and as handsome as a couple of new coins. Smart, too—the young man too smart by half. You could tell at a glance they had no right in the place, which was for very poor folk, and that they had come in just to guy. At least, that devilish young man had. He had a thin, dead-white face, a nose that wouldn't have looked amiss on a prince of old Babylon, black eyes the size of walnuts, and a smile—I'll tell you about that smile: Hilary, I've never in my life so wanted to do anything as to put my foot squarely down on that boy's smile. There was the whole dirty world of sneering and sin on that beautiful young face. I think of it now sometimes, and God knows not without reason. Call me a Dutchman, if they don't hate it even down in hell.

The girl wasn't any less beautiful, with her white face, black hair, black eyes, fine slim nose; but she was better, gentler, *nicer*. You could easily see that from the way, when she did meet my eyes, she did her level best to look serious and not to hear what her companion was whispering into her ear. She didn't particularly want to hurt my feelings—not she, no matter how much her man might want to. Of course I could have stopped the lecture and chucked the young man out, but I didn't want to go and have a rough-house the first time I was asked down to little Venice's poky old club.

It will puzzle me all my life (or what's left of it, let's say) to know why that diabolically handsome young man took such an instant dislike to me, and why I took such a dislike to him! For that was really at the bottom of all that followed—just black hatred, Hilary, from the first moment our eyes met. Of course the fancy young Armenian's dislike of me might easily be accounted for by saying he was a socialist and hated me because of all that "governing-class" rubbish. But can you explain why I, a more or less decent, sane, hard-working, normal sailor, should even trouble to think one way or the other about a comic young boy just because he had the bad grace to laugh at me when I was trying to entertain him? I can't help thinking that the girl had something to do with it even then—the girl and his own shocking smile. I mean, you simply couldn't help fancying that the lovely girl with the gentle eyes was in for a very bad time from that smile. Decidedly not my business, of course. But the young man went on whispering and laughing so all through my "rough" lecture that by the time I had finished, there was just one small spot of red on my usually placid mental horizon.

They began to clear out as soon as I had finished. The young Armenian's behavior hadn't, naturally, made my effort go any better, and I was sore. He needed a lesson, that bright young man. I collared him in the passage outside. Of course he and his young lady were much too smart to hurry themselves. Inside, Venice had given up poisoning her club with coffee and was trying to bring it round with shocking noises from a wireless set. I can see that passage now: a narrow stairway leading up to God knows where. Just one gas-jet, yellow as a sick Chinaman. The front door wide open to a narrow street like a canal of mud, for it was pelting with rain, and you could see sheets of it falling



There was a scream: "Mind out, Manana!" She jumped in front of me. . . . I held her as she fell backward.

between us and the lamp on the opposite side of the road. A man outside somewhere whistling, "Horsey, Keep Your Tail Up," and whistling it well. And the wireless set inside emitting equally shocking American noises.

He was tall, that young Armenian. I simply didn't feel I was old enough to be his father—just that I was up against a bad man. But there wasn't a thing that was mean about him, face, eyes or figure. Clothes awful, of course: one button well in at the waist, bright silk shirt, and a tie the color of a pillar-box with stripes of *crème caramel*. His young lady's eyes, in that sick light, shone like black jewels. It struck me she was terrified, the way she was staring at me. I was sorry for that; it wasn't her terror I wanted. And where I did want it, not a sign. Then I realized she wasn't terrified for him but for me. Cheek! I had the fancy youth by the shoulder—tight. He was still laughing at me. "This lout!" that laugh said. I can hear it now; it's somehow burnt into my mind. There was, confound it, a quite

extraordinary authority to that young man's eyes. He wasn't used to following anyone, not he.

I said: "Young man, your manners are very bad. What are you going to do about it?"

Calm, I was. So was he. He didn't answer, but he had given up smiling. He was looking sideways down at my hand on his shoulder. I've never had a pretty hand, but it has been quite useful to me, and I've grown attached to it. I can't attempt to describe the disgust and contempt in that boy's look. It sort of said: "What is that filthy thing on my shoulder?"

I said sharply: "I'm waiting."

The girl sighed: "Don't! Don't, Aram!"

As though, you know, he might hit me! Me!

Well, he might! I said: "Careful, young man!"

The girl whispered almost frantically: "Let him go, sir! Please. You don't know—"

I comforted her. I said I could take (Continued on page 135)

The Racing Fool

By Gerald Beaumont

Illustrated by Ernest Fuhr

FADING sunlight yielded to purple shadows that curtained a vast speedway from which sixty thousand people were making their way toward fleets of motor-cars and long lines of suburban trains. High in the covered stands, a band was playing: "Oh, Gee! If It Only Was Me!" And down below, the voice of "Bill the Dogman" addressed the departing spectators of the Knickerbocker Cup Race: "Well, well, folks, don't go 'way hungry! Get your official hot dogs! Self-startin' sausages, folks! The latest models, fully equipped and thoroughly lubricated! Get your inclosed Frankfurter Special—it's a wow! A dime, and you drive it away! Who's the next gent?"

Into a tiny dressing-room under the stands staggered three men, Blubber Doyle, pit manager for the Butterfly team; young Cheever, the mechanic; and between them the Black Ghost—"Wild Tom" Meredith, hero of the five-hundred-mile classic just concluded.

Meredith's arms were around the shoulders of his supporters. Oil and dust formed a mask out of which stared eyes that were flat and lifeless as those of a fish. His long legs dragged helplessly.

"Get him on the table," panted Doyle. "Swing him up! Now give me your knife. . . . No, no! You can't bend his arms! Cut his clothes off. Easy, Tom! Easy, old champ! Let go of everything! It's all over—just let go!"

Silence, save for the ripping of gaberdine cloth. Then the pit-pat of palms against naked flesh, and the all-pervading odor of liniment. The man on the table held forth his right arm pleadingly. The fingers were curved stiffly to the shape of the driving-wheel.

"In a minute!" panted Doyle. "Let me get the knots outa your legs first. Then I'll go after the hands. How's that side comin', kid?"

"Loosenin' up a bit. How you feelin', Tom?"

Meredith's head, eyes closed, rolled from side to side. "Better," he grunted. "How's Jim?"

Doyle answered: "He'll live. Smashed arms and a busted collar-bone. Car burned."

Wild Tom nodded. "Saw him get it. . . . Damn' near went off myself. . . . Five hundred miles is too much. They were on my tail all the way, first the Dutchman and then the Wop—tryin' to run my wheels off. . . . Tank come loose, and Bill had to hold it on. God, wont this room ever quit goin' around? . . . My leg's knotted up again! She's tied up again! Oh—oh—" His voice trailed off to a weary moan.

Doyle and Cheever bent over the suffering man, rubbing the knotted muscles, covering the dull eyes with hot cloths, massaging the long limbs, striving to restore circulation and alleviate his distress. Fatigue of this kind is a poison that permeates the whole system. Meredith had lost five pounds in weight during the

THE writer of this paragraph has never ridden with a racing driver around a speedway, but he has sat beside Gerald Beaumont in a California-poppy-colored car and ridden down the famous Silver Strand from Coronado to Tia Juana; and having done that, he's satisfied. The fact of the matter is, if Gerald were not a great fictionist, he'd be an equally great speedster. Which will account, in some measure, for the understanding he has put into this story.

progress of the race, five pounds of nervous vitality that he could ill afford to sacrifice.

Downtown, the sporting extras were already on the streets proclaiming in headlines the triumph of the wild man of the speedways. They carried pictures of the hero, photos taken before the race, revealing clean-cut, good-humored features wreathed

in the smile that press photographers insist shall be worn by every celebrity on whom they train a camera.

"Lucky dog!" said the public. "Twenty thousand for an afternoon's work! Guess he earned it, at that! Sure some drivin' fool! He'll get his, some day; they all do!"

Under the vigorous massage Meredith gradually relaxed. Back of the closed eyes a tired mind was trying to figure how much would be left of the twenty thousand dollars and the lap-prizes after he had split with his backers, rewarded his mechanic and pit-crew, paid up his season's debts and laid aside necessary funds for a campaign on the Coast. The problem was too much for him.

Ten years of life on the speedways of America had tamed the soul of Wild Tom Meredith. In the eyes of the public he was still the captivating figure of old. His name still conjured visions of a handsome man in dark goggles, sitting at the wheel of a black car that defied the limitations of time and space.

Press-agents had woven around him a thousand colorful tales, and his mission in life had been to live up to what was said of him. No man had striven harder to keep faith with the public. He was the supreme drawing-card in a motor-mad age, a racing driver whose name was synonymous with all that was picturesque and romantic in a game where life is a candle wavering in the wind.

Millions read of him in the public prints; millions paid to see him pulling out, one by one, the whiskers of Old Man Death. They thrilled at his exploits and delighted in his temperamental peculiarities, little realizing how much of the "color" had been invented for public consumption.

In reality, Wild Tom Meredith was now a quiet, serious man of thirty-five, whose real story, if he had one, was unknown to his associates. He was one of a small fraternity of professional drivers, numbering but a few dozens out of a population of one hundred and twenty millions, who traveled over the country in answer to the call of a public which demanded its thrill-glutted holidays.

The white belt and white shoes that set off the black costume were not of Meredith's selection. Langfield, who guided the destinies of the Butterfly team, had demanded distinctive attire. It was Langfield who had wished upon him the sobriquet of "Wild Tom;" who invented the story of the charmed crucifix, the perfumed kerchiefs, the lost letters of inheritance, the weird romance with the Vanishing Lady; and finally it was Teddy Langfield who



"Not that I don't love you, dear," she told him. "I do, and oh, so well! But this would be foolish and wrong, very wrong."

tipped off a newspaper man to what was supposed to be a professional secret among the drivers. Tom Meredith was particularly wild during *the full of the moon!*

"You don't have to take my word for it," said Langfield. "Ask any of the boys. They all know about it. He's crazy anyway, but when the old moon is round as a balloon tire, none of the mechanics will ride with him. He's liable to do anything. Go see Hans Wanser or De Pulva—they carry pocket calendars with the full-moon dates marked in red ink, and if Meredith's booked to drive at that time, you'll see those birds go to the pits early in the race and stay there!"

This was one of the few stories that had any basis other than the imagination of a press-agent. Most racing drivers had their pet superstitions, and sufficient had happened to warrant the friendly caution in the dressing-room: "Look out for Wild Tom when the moon's full."

Somehow this story appealed most to the public imagination. It formed the basis for many an argument along Gasoline Row, and for many a wager among the pit-crews who lined the speedways and toiled desperately at tire-changes during the progress of a race. And the more they argued, the more the story spread, until "lunar influence" became the accepted explanation for every mood of America's speed king.

Now, the strain was telling on the man who had been a public

idol for a decade. There were things he wanted, and things he could not have. The game had made him its slave. Far from bringing him the independence and quiet harbor of which he dreamed, each new triumph but whetted the public appetite and added to his obligations. His expenses increased, welding new chains of bondage, while the margin of years that remained to him grew less and less. None knew better than Wild Tom the true significance of the *checkered* flag, symbol of victory on the speedway. This was a game of sunshine and shadow, and the shadows predominated.

But he was not afraid. Physical fear formed no part of his make-up. He had seen Death grinning at him from behind a thousand trees and telegraph poles. He had broken the nerve of three mechanics, driven a blazing car off the sands of Ormond and into the ocean, flashed at one hundred and thirty miles an hour on tracks like glass, and thundered over freak courses so rough that he only knew he was on the track by the fence on either side. Men had been burned to death under cars that he was compelled to pass again and again without knowing whether the victim was Bill or Harry or Joe. More than once he had been spattered against a fence, and had awakened in an "anatomy garage" to find, much to his astonishment, that he had cheated the undertaker again.

No, he was not afraid! But the routine of the pro-

professional driver's life had satiated his soul and filled him with rebellion. The same old questions from young reporters. The never-ending round of entertainment from chambers of commerce, motor clubs and speedway promoters. The official receptions, the stag dinners, the inevitable invitation to "come upstairs and have a shot!" The same old grind of publicity stunts and wild parties staged in the name of entertainment.

Everywhere they went, particularly in the small towns, enthusiastic officials labored under the delusion that it was necessary to show the boys a good time. They thought that because Wild Tom Meredith could circle a track faster than any other man in history, his morals and temperament were in tune with his car.

Nor could he dodge these entertainments, for they were arranged in good faith by the promoters of the meets, and his presence was a matter of contract requirement. After all, it was part of the game—the necessary steps toward awakening community interest and enthusiasm in support of an approaching race.

"Elimination contests," Chet Gibson called them, after he had staggered into his room at midnight to discover that De Pulva, the great Italian, had been already deposited in Chet's bed along with an open umbrella, a street lantern and a "no parking" sign.

De Pulva was independently wealthy and in the game solely for his own amusement. Others, like Hans Wanser and Jerry Davis, owned their own cars and were reckoned as "safety" drivers, being well content with second and third money, and never starting when conditions were unfavorable.

But Wild Tom always started. Langfield accepted appearance with the understanding that Meredith's mission was to draw the crowd and furnish the thrills. So long as luck and his car lasted, the crowd watched no other figure than the Black Ghost. Meredith either won, or was forced out by tire- or engine-trouble, in which case the two remaining members of the team, driving with more regard for their steel thoroughbreds, took up the fight for the factory that had a black butterfly for its insignia.

All this has been told to show what manner of man it was who had won the Knickerbocker Cup Race and was thereafter carried to his room to be put to bed by a veteran of the pits and a youngster who had yet to learn the full drama of the game.

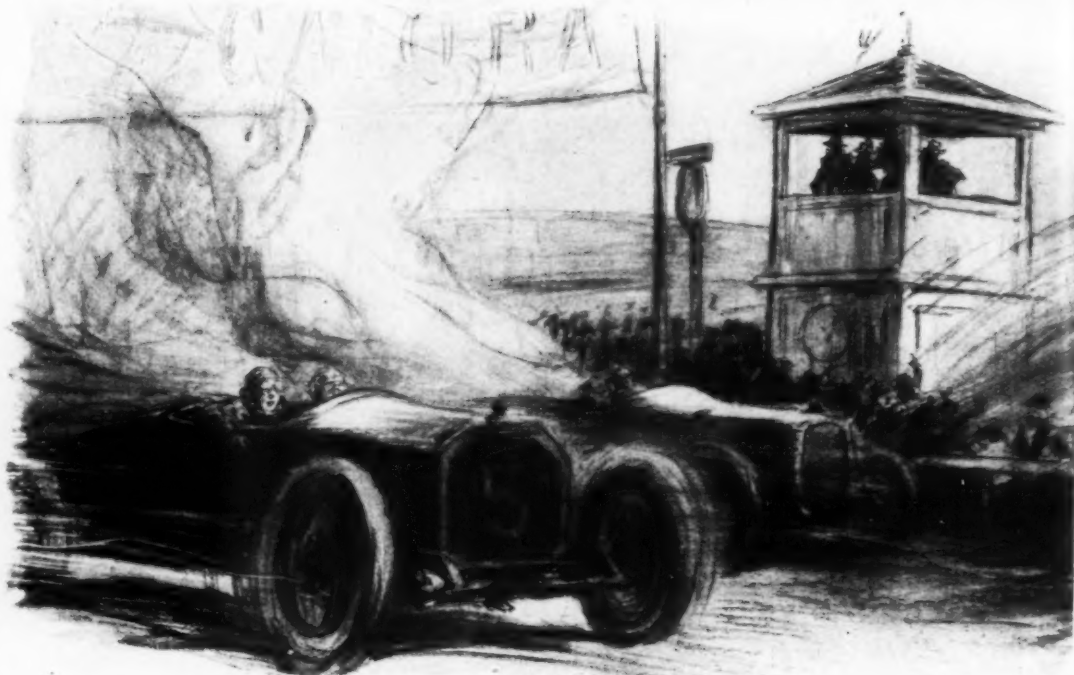
Meredith was drunk with fatigue, and his voice came in thick mumbles: "Las' race, I tell you! Can't stand it no more. G'way—g'way! Lemme alone! F'r Gawd's sake lemme alone! Lemme—"

His head touched the pillow; and instantly, and for eighteen blessed hours thereafter, Wild Tom slept the sleep of utter exhaustion.

Doyle and Cheever looked in on him once. The monarch of the whirling wheels gave no sign of life. The lines of fatigue were carved deeply into the handsome wind-burned face.

"Tough old game," muttered the young mechanic. "Wonder if Tom really figures on quitting?"

He put the question lightly, but in his eyes was the dream of every satellite of the boarded bowl who crouches at the side of his pilot, pumping oil and looking back, and wondering if he



will live to see the day when his own hands are on the driving-wheel.

Blubber Doyle, fat and philosophical, shattered Cheever's meditations. "Sure, Tom figures on quitting. They all do, but the hell of it is they wait until they're doing a hundred an' twenty an hour in the last lap on a bum front tire, and the band starts playin' 'Nearer My God to Thee!' That's how they quit in this game; they roll over three times and park in the cemetery. Tom aint driven his last race yet. Le's go eat!"

Blubber had the right hunch. The Black Ghost had not yet encountered his destiny. Even at this moment, as he lay unconscious in a room lit only by eerie moonlight,—the same moonlight that swayed him so strangely,—a girl in a little town three thousand miles away was perfecting the plans for his next appearance, and she was so very much in earnest that you should understand all that was involved.

Hidden in a blue-grass valley that resembles nothing so much as "old Kentuck'," and only thirty miles from San Francisco as the crow flies, the little town of Calora drowsed in the sunlight and meditated on the past.

Once, Calora had known the glory of a rare prosperity. That was in the heyday of California's "silver spendthrifts," a half-century ago, when fair women and fast horses formed the toast of millionaires.

The quaint charm of this secluded village was discovered by first one wealthy sportsman and then another. Haciendas were established on the hills, and presently these looked down upon a race-track owned and operated by men whose names were known nationally, and to whom money meant but little.

Here, as time went on, equine aristocrats—blue-blooded kings and queens of the trotting track—became as famous as their owners. They were foaled and weaned in pleasant pastures, trained and raced in an atmosphere of gentility and sentiment, and sent out to spread the glory of Calora.

But these things passed with the generation that was responsible for them. Calora had been the toy of rich men, and in an age of commercialism such toys were shelved. The haciendas were gradually deserted. The track was maintained for a while as a winter training-ground, but gradually it fell into disuse. The huge grandstand and the well-built stables were permitted to be scorched by succeeding suns and rotted by winter rains.

A great water corporation spread its tentacles over the valley, throttling all efforts at development. Rural it was, and rural it remained, a study in still-life—the only community in California that had not grown in forty years.

You see, Calora was off the beaten paths, those broad macadam highways of which California is so justly proud, and along which



He guided the car so that when it did turn over, and he beneath it, Cheever was thrown clear.

the State's amazing development has taken place. Nor could Calora, of its own resources, build the necessary concrete roads to connect up with a system by which her more fortunate sister communities profited.

So, while the rest of California paid homage to King Gasoline, and expanded profitably along marvelous highways equipped with garages, filling-stations, mushroom towns and harassed speed-cops, Calora lapsed into a Sleepy Hollow state of existence—a quaint village filled with Rip Van Winkles and so utterly unlike any other in the Golden State that one motion-picture director used it for "Way Down East," and another shot it as "My Old Kentucky Home." And the only way of improving either picture would have been to have used Diana Davis in the lead. For Diana was a village vision, and as different from other girls as Calora was unlike other towns.

No doubt the Bard was right, and there *is* nothing in a name. Nevertheless, to young Tom Meredith, who was born and raised in Calora, Diana Davis suggested the mystic beauty of the moonlight—calm, serene, virginal, yet potent with a charm that soothed his restless soul.

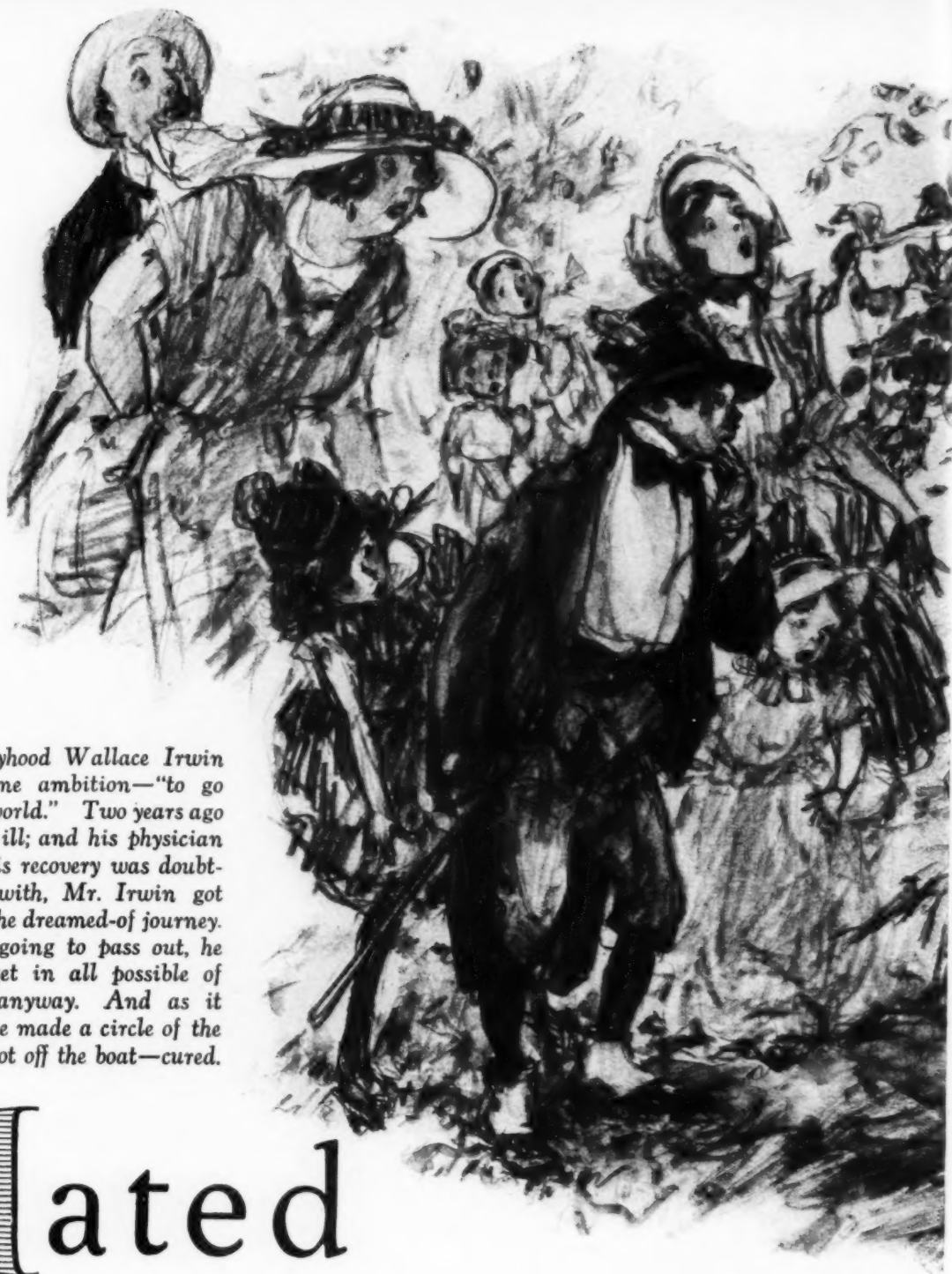
She was the daughter of the village minister, and he the son of the town drunkard, and of course they were in love! Deeply,

secretly and pitifully in love! Such things happen in a small town, and the only wonder of it was that they were able to hide their romance from the village gossips. Not even Diana's father—grim old bigot if there ever was one—suspected that his daughter was being courted by the wild youth at whom Calora looked askance. Had he known what was going on, his opposition would have been violent, and the village would have justified it. Even Diana knew that her heart was leading her along a lovely but forbidden path. Compassion had formed a stepping-stone for love.

Young Meredith's sins were all prompted by the restlessness that beset his soul. His father had been a gentleman and a sportsman—a lover of fast horses, one of the small group of millionaires who squandered their wealth on Calora in the early days. He was the only one who stayed—stayed until he had drunk himself into a pauper's grave and had been pointed to for years as the town's horrible example.

Small wonder that Calora looked with suspicion on this man's son, and that Tom Meredith in turn looked forward to the day when he could escape from his native town and never return. Even as a small boy, too young to understand his own emotions, his rebellious spirit sought relief in (Continued on page 155)

Illustrated
by
Henry
Raleigh



FROM boyhood Wallace Irwin cherished one ambition—"to go round the world." Two years ago he fell very ill; and his physician told him his recovery was doubtful. Forthwith, Mr. Irwin got tickets for the dreamed-of journey. If he was going to pass out, he meant to get in all possible of that trip, anyway. And as it happened, he made a circle of the earth and got off the boat—cured.

Mated

By Wallace Irwin

The Story So Far:

LUCINDA was twelve when the blow fell. She lived on Cynthea Court in a Southern city, with her well-loved father Ike Shelby, and her beautiful mother Matalea; and life, in the main, was good. Certain things, however, troubled Lucinda: Her mother, for instance, had made unpleasant scenes when she accused Ike Shelby of neglecting his business as tobacco broker for his adored amateur theatricals. There had never been any scenes, however, caused by the time Matalea spent in the society of Mr. Nash or the many other gentlemen of her acquaintance.

Lucinda had been tempted by a friend to go to a forbidden movie that dreadful day. Ike Shelby had found her there, but had not reproached her. She must, however, come home, he said: there were people there she must meet.

These people turned out to be a fat and overdressed Mr. and Mrs. Weaver, whom Lucinda disliked on sight. And she was informed that Mr. Weaver, not Ike Shelby, was her real father—and that she was to spend the ensuing six months with the Weavers in New Jersey.



Eddie relieved his mind. "I know what yer here for. Yer momma wants ya outa the way while she gits a divorce."

THE Weavers lived in a large, angular, pretentious Colonial house in a row of somewhat similar houses. It stood on an acre of lawn with a confusing number of circular drives and geometrical flowerbeds. It was a big, hard braggart of a house; even the flowers—scarlet cannas, crimson geraniums, electric-blue bachelor's buttons—had a hard look as they stared with brittle neatness at the frosty white paint on the ornate pillared portico.

Lucinda, of course, was in no mood to praise the Weavers' dwelling-place when first she set foot in it; indeed, all the way from her Southern town to the neat

Later one of the colored servants explained to Lucinda that Matala had divorced Mr. Weaver before Lucinda had learned to walk, and that the Decree had directed that the child was to spend half the year with each parent. Shortly afterward Matala had married Ike Shelby. Mr. Weaver had never before claimed Lucinda, but a year previously he had remarried, and the new Mrs. Weaver had laid claim to certain silver retained by Matala. An acrimonious correspondence had followed—and in revenge for their inability to replevin the coveted plate, the Weavers were claiming their six months of Lucinda. She was being betrayed for certain pieces of silver; and Shelby was powerless to prevent the crime. *(The story continues in detail:)*

suburbs of New Jersey, she had prepared her mind to hate it. Nor was she happily disappointed. She hated the first room she entered. It was a broad, waxed-floored, red-rugged, fiercely new interior with a curly white staircase leading upward to unknown antipathies; Mrs. Weaver unctuously referred to it as the Hall. And at last, ascending to the quarters which her new mother assured her were to be her Apartment, she had glimpses of glassy family portraits, glassy tiled bathrooms, glassy woodwork up and down the long corridors. And these she hated with a retching homesickness.

"You'll find Mademoiselle in your Apartment," promised Mrs. Weaver, panting a little as they mounted two flights. "Finnegan

will carry up your things, dear, and if there's anything you need, just tell me. I want my daughter to feel at home."

Daughter! She had called her that repeatedly on their trip north. Daughter! And must she call this strange lady Mother, and Mr. Weaver—with whom Mrs. Weaver quarreled almost constantly when they were together—must she call him Father? At the very thought Lucinda had a hysterical desire to giggle, and she was smothering the unmannerly impulse when Mrs. Weaver opened a newly varnished door and revealed a staring white chamber with florid chintz curtains and a baby-blue bedroom set. A shadow fell across a doorway beyond, and a short-skirted spinster with a pronounced beak and little gimlet eyes boring through thick-lensed glasses came simpering in. Lucinda, of course, hated her on sight.

"Mademoiselle," began Mrs. Weaver crisply, "this is my daughter."

"Ow do you do, Miss Weaver?" said Mademoiselle, offering a veiny hand.

So her name was Weaver now.

"She will have this room, Mademoiselle. She will breakfast and dine with Eddie in the sun-room, and have luncheon with us. You see, Lucinda,"—this last to her surprisingly acquired daughter,—"you and Eddie must be great friends." Then to Mademoiselle: "Where is Eddie? He must come in and meet his sister."

"He is so bad today," mourned Mademoiselle, as one reporting the condition of a sinking patient. "He has taken that hose from the gar-r-age and been squirting into Mr. Milliken's window—"

"Why do you annoy me with such things?" asked Mrs. Weaver irritably. "Go bring him here at once. I told you that I wanted him here to meet his sister."

Mademoiselle disappeared into the room beyond, and Mrs. Weaver followed in her wake, possibly in search of Eddie. Lucinda's momentary solitude gave her an opportunity to observe her "apartment." The window-hangings were pink, stamped with figures of Greenaway children rolling hoops; the walls were hung with hand-colored prints of Little Jack Horner, Little Boy Blue, Little Bo Peep. The electric fixtures on her blue bureau had been fashioned from small French dolls. The decorations went against her craw. Mother Goose for her! French dolls for her! She had been growing up at home to be a young lady, and here she was treated like a child of six.

Wandering into the next room, she was somewhat appeased. There was a very new pink velvet rug upon which rested a hodgepodge of white furniture vaguely related to the Louis XIV period. The curtains were the same color as the rug, and in a shiny corner bookcase she found a number of juvenile books—"Sink or Swim," "Wonders of Science," "The Bunker Boys in the Air." Nothing there interested her. But a glimpse around the brilliant decorations aroused in her, in spite of her qualms, a sort of vanity. This was to be her drawing-room. She had never had anything like that before. Here she would have a chance to get away from them, to write to Daddy, to read if she could find anything fit to read. Speculatively she went over to one of the windows, and had just reached out to touch a curtain when she sprang back, startled and alarmed.

FOR the curtain had moved a little, and on the rug, under its fringe, she could see a pair of brown shoes sticking out into the room. She stared for an instant, then asked quaveringly: "Who—whose that?"

"Pow!" The curtains parted rudely, and out of them hopped a boy, or an imp, or something equally inconsiderate. He was a hand's-breadth shorter than Lucinda; he wore a decidedly manish knickerbocker suit, a blue collar and a barber's-pole tie. His face, which was pie-shaped and snub-nosed, was distorted by the nervous activity of his jaw working on a cud of gum.

"Joke! Ha-ha!" he began mirthlessly, sticking out his tongue and his finger at the same instant. "Thought you was alone, dintcha? Zowie! Dint I watcha comin' in, lookin' likeya owned the whole cheese?"

"You get right out of here," she demanded in her haughtiest manner.

"Who'll make me, huh? Whose house is this, I'd like to know, yours or mine?"

"I didn't want to come to your old house," she was ill-mannered enough to say.

"Aw! Betcha was crazy to come. Poor relations is always stuck on comin' here to feed off Ma. Ma said you was goin' to be pretty. Pretty, my eye! Know whatcha look like to me? Somethin' the cat brought in. Look at yer legs! Spaghetti.

Whoops, yer a high-toned Southern belle, I don't think. And they want me to callya Sister. Sister!" He chose a caressing key, and while Lucinda backed away toward her bedroom, he followed her, gibbering: "Sister! Kiss me, Sister. Mother's molting—"

"I'll slam this door in your face and break your silly nose!" threatened Lucinda. She might have carried out her threat had not Mrs. Weaver appeared from the hall.

"Oh, here you are, Eddie!" she cooed. "I knew you children couldn't be kept apart very long. And how do you like your new sister, Eddie?"

"I think she's a bum," said he without hesitation. "Momma, jew know what she said to me just now? Yes, she did, Momma. She said she didn't want to come to our old place."

For an instant Mrs. Weaver's enameled face tightened resentfully, then relaxed again to its cloying smile.

"Oh, she didn't mean *that*. You'll be ever so comfy here, Daughter. And now I'll leave you two children together to get acquainted. I want you to become fast friends."

She closed the door softly and abandoned them to stare at each other like two small wild animals, locked miserably in the same cage and awaiting an opportunity to spring.

Chapter Nine

LUCINDA SHELBY chose to romanticize her days in Montclair, thinking of them as a prison term which she must serve, through no fault of her own and by the decree of an unjust judge. Taking it by and large, it was a nice prison. The beds were downy, the carpets soft, and the windows when you raised them didn't squeak and grumble as they did in the ramshackle house on Cynthea Court.

Mademoiselle was something of a pitiable object to her. More than once she saw the long nose redden, the gimlet eyes grow moist, after a bad quarter of an hour with Eddie. The boy had a talent for giving discomfort. His repertory was limitless, varying from such primitive torments as thumb-tacks in chair-seats, to the most artful of modern devices. Once he managed to fasten a double strand of copper wire to Mademoiselle's hat—she was just leaving for church—and to attach the other end to an electric fan; the invention succeeded in removing her hat and part of her hair.

"This is e-nough! E-nough!" screamed Mademoiselle, her nose dripping resentfully. "I shall resign here today."

"Joke! Ha-ha!" said Eddie. "You'll quit, I don't think. Momma pays you twice as much as you'd get any place else. Think it over, sweetie."

Mademoiselle, who possessed that Latin thrift to which Balzac testifies so often, thought it over. She merely held a sad conference with Mrs. Weaver, who ended in scolding her for wasting so much electricity. In summing up Eddie's case his mother said: "I am a great believer in self-expression. You mustn't thwart his personality, Mademoiselle. That's one thing I can't permit."

The unthwarted personality was never less than candid; to do Eddie full justice, he spoke as freely of his own family's affairs as of others.

"I got a pa back in Detroit," he said once, "but him and me don't mix. Momma got the divorce, you betcher life, when she found him spooning with a factory girl. When this pa of yours married Momma, he had to eat dirt. Sure, Mike! He married her for her dough, and men that does that don't cut much ice. Know how much money Momma's got?"

Lucinda didn't know and didn't care. Because her ears were sharp and she had little to do but avoid Eddie and Mademoiselle, she had opportunities to make a fairly clear estimate of the Weavers. Fairchild Weaver had an office in Montclair with some sort of "Realty Company" painted over the door. At luncheon, when the Weavers were together as a family, Eddie was completely quelled by the superior merits of the parental quarrel. Dissensions in the Montclair house were quite different from dissensions in Cynthea Court. With the Shelys it had always been one-sided, Mother ranting and Daddy knuckling under. But the Weavers were more evenly matched.

"Fairchild," Mrs. Weaver would begin, "there's no use lying to me any more. I know that dividend wasn't passed. I know what you've done."

"Orla, darling," he would counter sarcastically, "why don't you get another manager? I'm doing perfectly well in the real-estate business."

"Oh, you're beginning that again, are you?" she would inquire.



"Oh, don't let's quit yet," he insisted. "I'm going to stick around till your dad shows up."

"You'd make a fine mess of things if you didn't have me to back you."

Then Lucinda's father would wrinkle his smooth, plump, good-looking face and say: "I'll see Smedley this afternoon and turn the whole estate over to him."

"How can you talk like that to me?" She would begin to let tears trickle down her enameled cheeks. "After all I've done—"

At this point, probably, Eddie would intervene by breaking a plate, and Mrs. Weaver would relieve her feelings by calling in Stanton, the butler, and asking why he insisted on using her expensive Sèvres when the children were at the table. Didn't he know those plates were priceless? Then she would tell him exactly how much they cost.

With Mrs. Weaver the cost of articles amounted to an obsession. In her pleasanter moods she would visit Lucinda's suite and tell her that she should appreciate everything, because it had cost eighteen hundred dollars to have the rooms done over by a decorator. She had an apartment downstairs with a large, satiny, scented room which she referred to as her bood-war. The closets were lined with mirrors; there were full-length mirrors in every corner; there was a couch, a settee, a divan, a *chaise longue*; there were lamps on the dressing-table decked out as Louis XIV court ladies. "It cost me ninety-five hundred dollars," she would explain with unction.

As far as Lucinda could learn, the Weavers dwelt in a fashionable section of Montclair without being a part of it. Something

about the Weavers—possibly Orla Weaver's purse-proud vulgarity, or maybe a phase in Fairchild Weaver's past life—at any rate, neighbors never came to his house. Young though she was, Lucinda had been trained to the intensive snobbery of Cynthea Court, and in the visitors to the Weavers' drawing-room she recognized a type which her mother would have resented.

There were the McCanns, who generally "dropped in at cocktail time," as they themselves phrased it. They came in a loud gray runabout, drank and stayed over for dinner. Mr. McCann was a very large man with a passion for yellowish suits with red crisscross bars running through the weave. Mrs. McCann was small, very blonde; her neck was beginning to bulge with the sort of fat that comes from careless living. Then there were the Spiegels, not so frequent as the McCanns, but sufficiently attentive. Mr. Spiegel had a narrow, greenish face and bad teeth; Mrs. Spiegel looked as though she might have taken her enamel out of Orla's own box. A tall, saturnine young man they called "Nookie" came every other day. Sometimes he was there for lunch, and was very jolly after cocktails; Nookie "got off" things which the Weavers called "cracks." Some of these he repeated in whispers, his arms around his host's and hostess' shoulders. Nookie was amusing, and in the afternoon he rode with Mrs. Weaver in her limousine.

"I want you to meet my daughter," gushed Mrs. Weaver on the afternoon when Lucinda was hurried into her newest frock and brought down to the drawing-room. Several people were sipping out of amber glasses which the patient Stanton replenished from an embossed silver shaker. An excited tongue-clatter stopped, and several pairs of pop eyes were turned curiously toward her.

"This is my daughter, Mrs. McCann," said Orla, leading the girl from chair to chair, "and Mr. McCann and Mrs. Spiegel and Mr. Spiegel—pardon my informality. Oh, yes! And this is Nookie."

"I'll say I am," whinnied the sardonic youth, showing a mouthful of crooked long teeth.

"What a lovely child!" exclaimed Mrs. McCann, holding out her glass to be refilled.

"She's the daughter of Mrs. Isaac Shelby, you know," said Orla in exactly the tone she used in showing off her Queen Anne reproductions in the dining-room.

"Yes, I know," admitted Mrs. Spiegel, impressed. "How long will you have her with you, Orla?"

"Oh, a long time. —Stanton, don't forget my glass! Yes, indeed. She loves it here. We give her so many advantages which she never had before. Now sit down, dearie—and Stanton, pass her the caviar sandwiches."

"Pass her a cocktail," suggested Nookie.

"Shut up, you horrid boy!" chided Orla lovingly.

"You do love it here, don't you, darling?" asked Mrs. Spiegel, drawing a fat hand across Lucinda's cheek.

"Oh, yes," chimed Lucinda like a mechanical doll.

"And don't you have fun playing with Eddie?"

"Oh, yes," clicked Lucinda.

"If I played with Eddie, I'd carry a piece of gas-pipe up my sleeve," volunteered Nookie.

"You've said something!" This remark came from Fairchild Weaver, who had hitherto lurked in the background. During Lucinda's stay in Montclair, he had done almost nothing to show his fatherhood, save to wander in and out of her room, smiling tolerantly, his hands in his pockets. Lucinda sat numbly, eating caviar while the conversation flew crazily about, now here, now there. They wanted to see the two new pearls which Mrs. Weaver had added to her string. Mrs. Weaver brought out the string, detailed the weight and price of every pearl, and told them all rapturously that Fairchild had promised to give her two more every year, on her birthday and at Christmas.

"They're magnificent!" cried Mrs. McCann.

"We think they're rather nice," acknowledged Mrs. Weaver.

Lucinda helped herself to more sandwiches. They were very good, she thought, and the tray was next her chair. Of course



Lucinda was a very busy child that evening.

they'd give her indigestion, and she wouldn't want any supper. How queerly they all behaved! The women's voices were becoming high and squeaky; the men were bawling out their jokes. Nookie started one, and before he had come to the point, Mrs. Spiegel said: "Hush!"

"Oh," bleated Nookie, "I forgot all about the kindergarten. Say, Orla, where's that million-dollar butler of yours? He's run away with the shaker."

"He's getting dreadfully surly," admitted Orla. "I'm afraid—" Here she lowered her voice to the whisper with which we confide domestic difficulties: "I'm afraid he's going to leave."

"Oh, well," grinned Nookie, "you've got a grand understudy here. Why not let little Samantha—excuse me, I mean to say, little Lucinda—say, what's in those cocktails anyhow? But what I mean to say is, why not teach little Lucinda to shake 'em up?"

"Darling," said Mrs. Weaver, addressing Lucinda, "the shaker's right over there on the table. Wont you pour Nookie a drink?"



Mrs. Weaver was having a birthday. The shaker had been emptied once and refilled.

The child turned bashful eyes toward her father, instinctively, as she would have looked to Daddy for help in such a situation. But Weaver sat grinning, enjoying the joke. Therefore she slid out of her chair and went over to the table, where she took the cold container in both her hands and brought it to Nookie.

"Pour it, sweetie," he coaxed. "Do you no harm to learn early. And if Stanton quits,—I don't blame the poor devil if he does,—we'll teach you to mix a cocktail that would grow hair on a garter-snake's back."

Chapter Ten

THERE were jolly letters from Daddy which Lucinda answered in kind. The first one came from him the day after her hope-chest arrived, swaddled in a strip of canvas out of the old tin garage. It was uncrated downstairs, and Lucinda was summoned

to the laundry, where Mrs. Weaver stood with the lid lifted, curiously regarding its contents!

"What's in this, Lucinda?" she asked.

"My things from home." Lucinda was firm.

"Nothing you'll need here," laughed Mrs. Weaver. "We'll give you plenty of things. Just put it in the attic, Finnegan."

The child did not protest. It seemed kinder, somehow, to put Daddy's memorable gift beyond their laughter. She went back to her room and read his letter. They couldn't laugh at that!

"Dear Cinders," it said, "I got after that hope-chest of yours the evening you left—it looked sort of dusty, so I gave her a coat of wax. I couldn't get Emblem Smith to crate it, because he's had a very serious wedding in his family and won't be around for a week. I hope the slats don't come off. If you see a spot of gore on the left-hand upper corner, just say, 'Out, damned spot!' and remember that it came from your Daddy's thumb—I hit it again in the same place. (Continued on page 143)



The she-wolf sprang forward, and for a moment her flaming eyes stared into the sinister ones of the carcajou.

Illustrated
by
Charles
Livingston
Bull

The Devil of Doomsday

By Samuel Scoville, Jr.

SAMUEL SCOVILLE, JR., is today one of the best known naturalists in America. His books are read wherever there is interest in the wild life of these northern latitudes. If you see him with a suitcase in a Philadelphia railway station, it's an even chance that the case does not contain clothing, but --snakes. Just now he is planning a journey into the far Northwest to study the last herd of wood bison on this continent.

COLD, utter cold, so intense that the frozen earth on Doomsday Mountain cracked here and there clear to the rock below. In a black-violet sky the bitter stars flared like lamps and seemed to throw off flashes and gleams of light like metal consumed in oxygen. At the horizon the northern lights flickered in a procession of dull reds, lute-greens and strange blues not found on earth. Sometimes they would wave in vast curtains of color as if blown by winds beyond the world, while in the star-shine

the tree-trunks showed sepia and lavender against the cobalt-blue shadows of the snow.

Suddenly, so faint that it seemed but a pin-prick of sound through the silence, came the long-drawn-out howl of a hunting wolf. Again and again it sounded, louder and nearer to the slope of the dark mountain until it belled through the night not a mile away. Beginning with a low-pitched wail, it rose and swelled until it burst like a rocket into a full-throated howl of indescribable menace.

A gray timber-wolf with three of her last year's cubs was running a deer which was heading through the woods for the ravines and ridges of Doomsday. The snow was not deep enough to slow his speed; nor were the yearling wolves experienced enough to take the cut-offs by which a veteran pack gains ground; and the chase bade fair to last all night.

Twice the hunted animal back-tracked for a hundred yards or so, and then, with a tremendous bound to the side, concealed himself in a thicket. When the pack passed, he slipped out like a shadow, doubled, and would have escaped had it not been for the crafty she-wolf, whose keen nose each time smelled out the trick and picked up the trail, which led straight up through a narrow gorge.

As the weird voices of the wolves shuddered up the mountain-side, they aroused from a shallow cave at the far end of the

ravine a strange squat beast with a seal-brown back and a stripe of lighter brown running clear around its sides. It resembled somewhat a small bear, save that it had a bushy flaunting tail such as no bear ever wore. Thirty-eight of the fiercest teeth of all the flesh-eaters, enormous paws armed with curved horn-colored claws, and sinister, deep-set, green-shadowed eyes stamped it beyond peradventure as that king of killers, the wolverene—the carcajou of the lost Erie tribe whose totem it was.

Although the giant weasel's small ears were half-hidden in its shaggy fur, no one of the wild-folk can hear better than the wolverene. Even as he listened to the distant howl of the hunting pack, he caught the sound of the approaching beat of small hoofs in the snow, although no living creature was yet visible down the length of the trail.

Clambering out on a point of rock which overhung the trampled deer-path, the carcajou coiled himself up in a brown ball and waited, still as a stone in the shadow of the overhanging ledge. Only the gleam of deep-set eyes from under his shaggy brows showed that the grim beast was ware and waking.

Nearer and nearer came the beat of the swift hoofs, until around a distant bend in the trail showed the lithe bounding figure of the buck. His last double had been solved by the old wolf so quickly that his lead had been cut down to a few hundred yards, and he was running desperately for his life around the mountain.

The froth lay white against his gray winter coat; his breath came in gasps, and his branching horns were bending low. Yet in spite of weary hours and interminable miles run at top-speed, the buck's stride carried him up the slope with all the swift, dainty precision which marks the running of a deer even to his last gasp.

As the hunted animal approached the promontory where the wolverene crouched, the latter's dark body seemed to flatten against the rock. Then, just as the buck was passing, the carcajou shed his slowness as a man might take off a mask, and hurled himself through the air with all the swift, silent sureness of one of the great cats. Before the buck could swerve from his course, the squat bulk of the grim beast landed on his back. In an instant four sets of keen curved claws clamped themselves deep into the stricken deer's sides; the wolverene's great mouth gaped like a grave; his fierce jaws snapped shut, and in the very middle of a bound the buck pitched forward, dead before he reached the ground, the vertebrae of his neck pierced and crushed by the dark killer's fatal teeth.

Snarling savagely, the wolverene instantly began to feed upon the quivering carcass. In the middle of his meal four gray shadows slipped across the snow toward him, and he looked into four pairs of straw-colored eyes gleaming like pale flame as the wolves made a death-ring around him.

There are few animals of the North who will give odds of four to one to the timber-wolf. The carcajou is one of those few. If this one was startled, he did not show it. Staring coolly around the circle, which narrowed as the wolves crept closer, he dropped his blunt, wrinkled muzzle, and insolently tore off another strip of flesh from the carcass of the buck.

The wolves had hunted the sun out of the sky and the moon above the rim of the world, and had endured too many weary miles of hunger and fatigue to see their hard-earned quarry de-

vooured by another without a struggle, and the death-circle narrowed about the unconcerned hunched figure. Suddenly, with a lithe instantaneous swiftness, the foremost of the young wolves sprang, and as he landed, delivered the terrible, raking, sidewise slash of his kind. Swift as was the stroke, the counter was swifter. Even as the long gray body struck the ground, the wolverene, sagging

low on three paws, struck a full-arm blow with every ounce of his tremendous strength back of it, and caught the wolf just as his long jaws were closing.

The carcajou's curved claws ripped clear through his opponent's thick hide as if it had been paper, from the angle of the jaw clear to the shoulder-blade. The bare force of the blow whirled the wolf over and over through the air, and he landed dazed and bleeding ten feet away.

As her cub struck the ground, the she-wolf herself sprang forward, her lips snarling back over her glistening teeth, her face a mask of utter rage, and for a moment her flaming eyes stared into the sinister ones of the carcajou. There are not many animals for which a timber-wolf in winter at the head of a pack will turn aside. Wolverenes, however, lived on earth long before wolves. Beyond the Second and even the First Ice Age, half a million years ago, among cave-lions and saber-toothed tigers, the ancestors of this one had learned the grim tactics and imperturbable confidence

With a screech of rage the lynx clamped his claws into the great weasel's shaggy hide



which that night under the flare of the northern lights made the wolf back away.

* Four wolves could undoubtedly kill one wolverene, but it was just as certain that before he died he would dispose of one if not two of his assailants. Wherefore the old wolf herded her little pack with bristling backs and bared teeth away from the carcajou, who regarded them inscrutably as they moved off.

As the pack disappeared behind the tree-trunks, the dark, imperturbable beast went on with his meal; nor did he stop eating until a whole hindquarter of the buck had disappeared. Then he dragged the remainder of the carcass to the cave in the cliff and buried it under the dry leaves which had been his bed, and departed to another den miles away, sure that the musky scent of his breed which clung to the cave would keep any other animal from meddling with his kill.

THE next night found him hunting on the other side of the mountain, lurching through the snow with a curious pacing gait which seemed clumsy but which yet ate up the distance like fire. Suddenly he stopped and sniffed at a ridge in the drifted whiteness. At the touch of his blunt muzzle the hummock burst like a bomb, and a magnificent cock grouse, which had been sleeping cosily in a warm round room beneath the snow, whirled into the moonlight, his iridescent black-green ruff standing out a full three inches around his neck. The brown shaggy body of the great weasel shot upward as if on steel springs a good three feet into the air, caught the escaping bird just back of the gleaming collar, and in a second had snapped his neck asunder.

Devouring the plump body of the bird in a few hurried gulps, the dark killer resumed the wide circle which he had been making around the base of the great mountain. Hunt as he would, that was the only kill he made that long night through, and just as the first gray light of dawn seemed to rise from the shadowed snow, he approached the cave where he had cached the deer the night before, with a hunger gnawing at his entrails like a rat.

As he swung up the hillside, all of his murderous teeth suddenly showed, and he gave a growl so deep that it seemed to come from underground. Just ahead, feeding on the carcass of the deer which it had dragged out of the cave, crouched what looked like an enormous pale-gray cat with a bob tail, and eyes that gleamed a gooseberry-green against the pallid snow. Down from the North had come to Doomsday a stranger lynx who knew not the wolverene nor his ways. A wide frill of silky black-streaked hair around his jaws added an impressiveness to his fierce and striking face, with its long, slanted, gleaming eyes, pricked-up tufted ears and daggerlike teeth gleaming against the red lining of his grinning mouth. As he stood up with a menacing snarl, he towered above the squat clumsy figure of the carcajou, who moved silently toward him.

If that lynx had been more experienced, he would never have waited for the encounter but would have escaped on his wide snowshoelike pads at a rate which the other could not have equaled. The great cat, however, had not the least intention of retreating before the clumsy-looking beast which lurched toward him. Armed with teeth and claws of the first rank, the odds seemed to be all in the lynx's favor. Yet he had not a chance. Wasting no time in feints, the wolverene rushed straight at his antagonist, who, with a rasping screech of rage, sprang from the carcass on which he was feeding and landing on the humped back of the carcajou, clamped his claws deep into the great weasel's shaggy hide and attempted to drive his stiletto-like teeth through the other's spine.

The wolverene is not a scientific fighter. He doesn't have to be. Sheer strength is his long suit, and it is very long indeed. Before that astonished lynx knew what had happened, a great paw armed with claws nearly as fierce as his own had reached up and across, caught him on the far side and hurled him to the ground on his back as if he had been a rabbit instead of a forty-pound Canada lynx.

Pinning down the struggling animal's hindlegs so as to avoid the fierce play of his eviscerating claws, the carcajou closed his grim jaws like a trap of death across the other's throat—nor ever loosed their grip until with a last convulsive struggle the lynx lay stark upon the dead deer. Half an hour afterward the carcajou had finished the remains of the doubly stolen carcass and had cached that of the lynx in its place in his cave.

IT was a week later that the grim ruler of Doomsday met an enemy fiercer than the lynx, crueler and more crafty than the wolf. For every animal devoured by either, that little wizened faggot of a man, Jules Dupré the half-breed trapper, slaughtered

a score. Martens he killed in deadfalls; fox, muskrat and beaver he caught in steel traps; lynx he strangled in snares; and even the tiny snow-white ermine were lured to their death and caught by their small pink tongues on heavy strips of iron, smeared with grease and laid out in the freezing air.

The dark green of the hemlocks on Doomsday was crowned with a wreath of blue-gray clouds drifting across a turquoise sky as the old trapper neared the mountain following the course of a stream, which hurried down to meet him like some breathless messenger bent on warning him away. Overlooking a little waterfall stood a deserted cabin, and there Jules made his headquarters.

That first night, rolled up in his blankets before the fire, the old trapper slept badly. Over and over again he dreamed that some malignant presence was staring at him through the dark; and once, when he woke up, something green and dreadful gleamed in the moonlight that showed through a wide crack between the logs of the cabin.

The next morning, as he started before dawn to blaze out his trap-lines, he saw in the star-shine all about the cabin a circle of round tracks, each one coming to a peak of fierce claw-marks. The half-breed spat in the snow as he looked.

"No wonder I no sleep last night," he muttered. "Injin devil he come; my luck, it go."

As he moved through the dawn-dusk among endless rows of dark tree-trunks, the old trapper, with that strange sixth sense of a wilderness-dweller, felt that he was being followed. Again and again he turned quickly and peered back along his trail but never was there anything to be seen save the silent trees and the shadowed snow. Then, just as the first level beam pierced through the hemlocks like a golden blade, he suddenly doubled on his tracks, raced back through the soft snow and stationed himself behind a tree where he could see along his back-trail. A moment later, from behind the drooping boughs, a humped black shape came into sight not ten feet away. For an instant the sinister eyes of the beast looked into those of the man, which glittered like black glass. Then the carcajou did a strange thing. Shading its eyes from the rising sun with an almost human gesture, it looked long at the man from under its paw. A little shiver ran through the body of the old trapper.

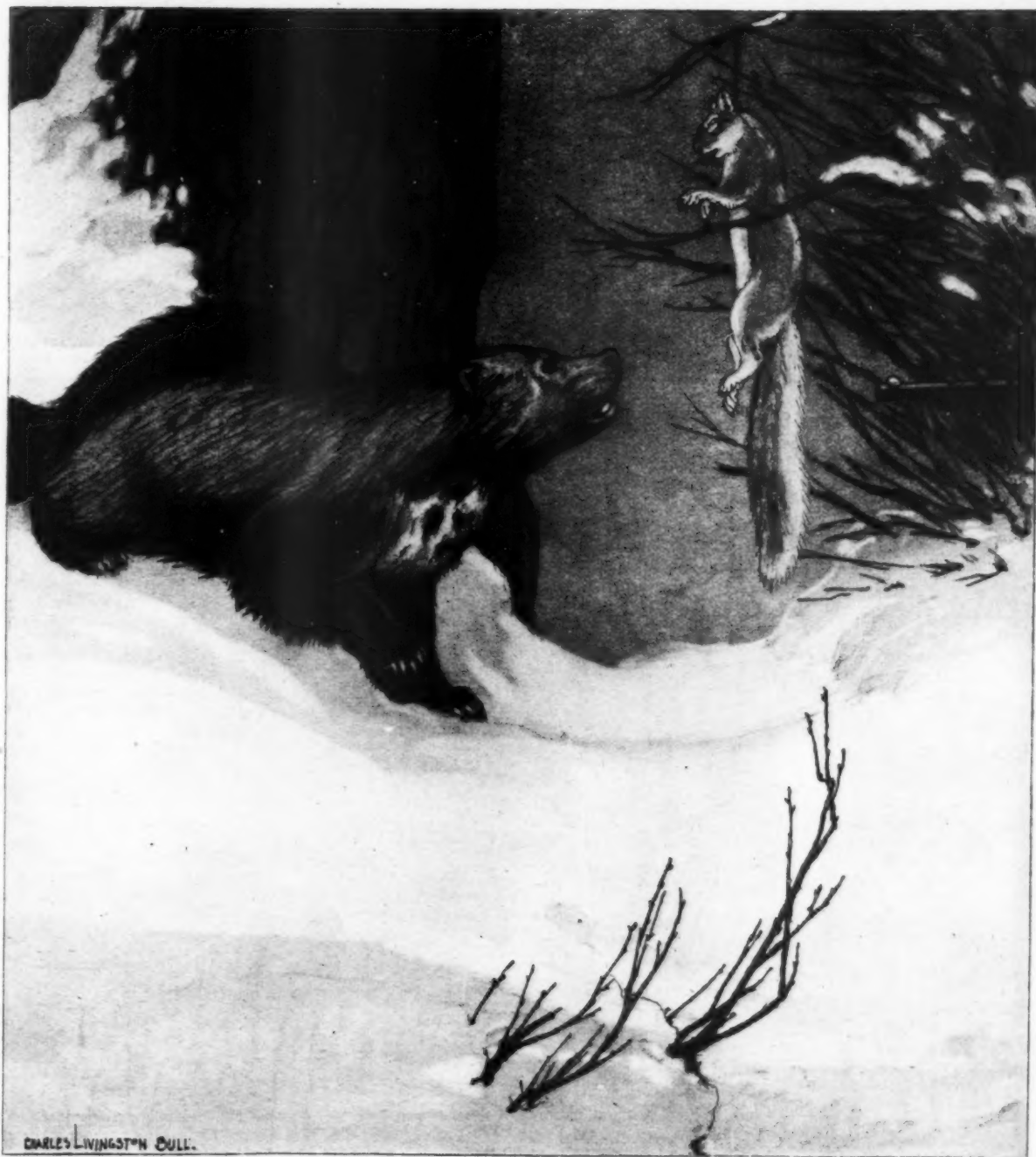
"Black devil—overlook me, will you!" he shouted, and rushed upon his enemy with uplifted ax; but with a few clumsy bounds the wolverene easily evaded him and disappeared among the trees.

WITHIN the week the evil fortune, which all half-breed trappers believe fastens upon one who has been "overlooked" by an Indian devil, began to dog Jules' footsteps. His traps were sprung, his baits stolen, his deadfalls shattered; and worst of all, his catches were torn to pieces. Again and again he found fragments of the beautiful golden-brown fur of pine-martens strewn upon the snow, each ruined pelt like the loss of minted dollars to him.

Then came a day when he found a magnificent Canada lynx dead in a noose of copper wire which he had fastened at the end of a bent sapling and baited with frozen fish. The great cat had thrust his head through the noose to seize the bait and had released the catch. Instantly the tree had sprung back and drawn the wire tightly about his throat; whereupon the lynx went into the same hysterical flurry of fear which a domestic cat shows in a trap, and fighting desperately against the springing sapling, in a very few minutes had strangled himself.

Stripping off with skilled hands the soft silver-gray pelt, Jules left the carcass beside the trail and surrounded it with a cordon of cunningly concealed traps. Then, as he had a long way to go, he dug a deep hole in a drift, and wrapping the pelt up as tightly as possible, cached it there, and filling up the place with snow, continued on his twenty-five-mile round. When he returned the next day, the frozen body of the lynx lay stark and untouched in the snow, although the tracks of the carcajou showed where he had approached and walked all around the line of traps. Apparently, too, the place where the pelt had been hidden was also undisturbed. Yet when Jules dug down through the snow he found the hole empty. The wolverene had smelled out the skin through three feet of snow, dug it up, filled in the hole carefully and gone off with the pelt.

At the end of his route Jules had made a cache where he kept a full half of his traps and a quantity of bacon and cornmeal, so that when he had trapped out the territory near the cabin he could make a winter camp by the cache and open up new trapping-lines. Digging down through the snow to the bare ground, he had cut and piled over his traps and provisions a



The carcajou had gone up to the bait, smelled it carefully, but left it untouched.

crisscrossed mass of great logs as large as he could handle with a heavy pole for a lever. Over these he'd poured water from a near-by spring, which froze instantly, locking the mass into an abatis of bristling logs which it would have taken a strong man with an ax hours to remove.


For three days after he had lost the lynx pelt, Jules found his traps and deadfalls undisturbed and began to hope that his lurking enemy had gone and that he would be left unmolested for the future. Then, at the end of the third day, he reached in his round the cache at the northern boundary of his trapping-lines. It was a cache no longer. With a patience and strength which seemed not of earth, the carcajou had gnawed and clawed away the ice which bound the great logs together, and with the iron muscles of his bent forelegs and squat strong body had scattered the heaped-up tree-trunks like jackstraws until he reached the traps and provisions below. The bacon he had devoured, and the meal he had scattered and defiled. Worst of all, every one of the steel traps was missing, carried away and hidden beyond

all finding. This meant that later in the winter, when new trap-lines were opened, there would be a serious lessening of Jules' intake of fur; and the loss of such a store of provisions meant short rations before spring.

The old man's face was black and set as he started back, and there was a look almost of fear in his close-set little eyes as he glanced from side to side along the trail for a glimpse of the dark figure which he felt was never far away.

Although he saw nothing of the wolverene himself, yet not far from the cabin he met evidences of his work which in spite of his Indian stoicism nearly drove the old half-breed mad.

Over a little spring which kept open all the winter through he had hung the head of a partridge on a smoked string, and beneath that had hidden a trap in the shallow water, covering the pan with a dab of green moss so that it looked like a stone just showing above the surface. A fox dislikes getting his trim, slim, black feet wet, and any one of that breed which chanced to pass that way might be counted (Continued on page 108)



Illustrated by
Howard Chandler
Christy

Silk Velvet

By Margaret Culkin Banning

"Where can you wear that? That cream is for a wedding-dress." "I surely won't need it, then," said Judith.

IT was on display—fold on fold of shining, regal velvet hanging from the standards of the counters. From far down the broad aisles of the great department store it caught the eye, colors brave under the stream of artificial "daylight" poured on it electrically. There was the scarlet of cardinals and the purple of kings, hunting green and golden browns. There was black so soft in its depths that it seemed to be fathomless, and dull-blue velvet like the lining of a jewel-case. The colors arrayed themselves together without clash because they were perfect and confident; and among them, hanging from its support like the dress of a queen, was a piece of ivory velvet so soft and impractical and wasteful in its delicacy that it hung there all day uncut.

The first snow was softly falling outside, and the warmth and

majesty of the velvet suggested winter beauty to many a shopper. Blondes with bleached hair bought the blue velvet, hoping vainly that it could restore their faded beauty. Women with bold eyes bought lengths of the scarlet, which could only accent their boldness. Women who should have bought golden brown chose green, and many mistakes were made because the soft depths of color tempted women into hopes of loveliness and did not warn them of the caricature which lurks on the other side of beautiful things and reveals itself if they are misplaced even a little.

It was in the middle of the afternoon rush when Judith Leland came down the aisle in her quiet, direct way. She had none of the halting manner of the casual buyer, but went gravely about her business as if shopping were a necessity which rather bored

MMARGARET CULKIN BANNING is one of those fortunate fictionists who can see the real drama of our common life from their own front yards. In all of her stories she concerns herself with human adventures and reactions to circumstances as they are revealed in the society of an average American city: the sort of city that is duplicated many times in these United States. Her own home is a Midwestern city, Duluth—which, perhaps, is all the better for her literary purpose.

her. Beside her trotted her mother, a little woman shrouded in Alaskan sealskins, whose imperative, expensive look sent saleswomen bustling toward her as if they scented the limousine waiting for her outside in the falling snow.

"If you're going to look at materials, go ahead, Judith," said Mrs. Jarvis. "I'll be right there. I want to stop at the glove counter just long enough to return those gloves that split."

"It won't take me long," answered Judith. "I'm just getting some dark-blue crêpe. I wish I could have found something ready made."

She sat down at the dress-goods counter without interest. It had been horrid, hunting around for a dress ready to wear. All of them looked badly on her; all of them had made her resentful of herself as she had come to be. The mirror had again and again given back the image of a heavy-eyed young woman with a weight of smooth, badly dressed hair. She had tried to believe it was the fault of the gowns, and finally in her discouragement had refused to try on more of them. She would buy some material and let Miss Haines make it for her.

And now she didn't want to buy material. The fabrics which the clerk spread before her were all as distasteful as the gowns had been. She turned them over dully. Black, dark-blue—stuff for dresses to serve the double master afternoon and evening—the proper clothing for a divorced woman who didn't go out much—who had to be clothed even if no one cared how she looked, least of all herself. Black crêpe, navy-blue satin, chocolate brown—saddled materials—much what she had always worn, to be sure. It was what she always would wear henceforth. Her eyes rested resentfully on the velvets, and a vague thought trailed through her mind that hundreds of women wore evening dresses of such material. Kirk probably knew women who wore such



Judith stepped out of her dinner dress and wrapped the velvet around her.

clothes, women who didn't bore him, women whom he didn't affront with his speeches and his actions—vulgar women, beautiful women!

"Would you consider velvet?" asked the salesman.

"Nothing so elaborate," she answered shortly.

"They're very beautiful," he insisted; "all silk velvet. We're selling a great many of them for afternoon and evening wear. There's a lovely black."

He held it before her, and Judith felt angry. Why assume that she must have black?

"I'm not interested in black velvet," repeated Judith.

"The colors are lovely too. There's a wonderful shade of green—quite new."

Judith fingered the dark cloth spread before her, trying to shut out the sight of the velvets. They had nothing to do with her, and she knew it, but the thought of them, bright and proud for decking out successful women, taunted her. She hated the dull stuff before her.

"A very good wearing piece—durable," the clerk argued, on returning from his digression on velvet to the sale before him, and holding a breadth of the material up under his chin, absurdly.

Judith felt a kind of nausea at the thought of buying. She wished her mother would conclude her wrangle over the split gloves and come. Her eyes went from the crêpe to the shining velvets and again she was disturbed.

"Let me see that piece of ivory velvet," she said unexpectedly.

The clerk, used to strange shifts in women shoppers, took it down for her, and Judith slipped one hand under its folds. So beautiful, so useless—a dress for a

wedding—an evening dress for a slim dark woman. She liked the soft luster, the shining simplicity.

"Beautiful, isn't it?" The clerk broke in upon her reverie, almost startling her.

"Six yards of it, please," said Judith, toning her voice to indifference. "Yes—I'll take the crêpe also."

She saw her mother approaching and felt ridiculous. But the scissors had already begun to slither through the velvet when Mrs. Jarvis decided her daughter.

"They were horrid about those gloves," she said. "I spoke to the manager and he adjusted it. Really insolent! Did you get what you wanted, Judith?" She looked observantly over the counter. "That blue crêpe? Sure it won't crock? Are you sure, young man? That cream velvet isn't for you, is it, dear? But if you wanted velvet, Judith, why didn't you get the black? Or the pretty piece of brown—so lovely with your hair. Where can you wear that? That cream is for a wedding dress."

"I surely won't need it, then," said Judith in her low voice, and there was a hint of something in its tone that made her mother look at her nervously. Judith was coming along very well, but there had been one or two times since she had left that man, when she had been pretty "bad." Mrs. Jarvis decided to waive further discussion of the velvet.

Judith knew that tolerant silence of her mother. It was part of the dreadful stillness that had surrounded her break with Kirk—when no one spoke of Kirk or the fact that she had been abused and neglected. The whole process of the divorce had been like looking at her own corpse, treated kindly and with silent respect. It surrounded her now as she went out of the shop with her mother and they took their places in the limousine drawn up to the curb. A boy on the curb with a tray of flowers tried to sell them bunches of doctored violets. Judith shuddered. Such things were always happening to jog her memory. If Kirk had been along, he would have stopped to buy the violets. He might buy them for a peace offering or to cover up fragrantcy, but he always bought her flowers. Toward the end of her endurance, it had seemed that he took the beauty and fragrance out of them. They always were the culmination of some episode of anger or shame.

Once, when the car swerved a little, Mrs. Jarvis spoke through the tube to the chauffeur and told him to go slower. Peaceful and safe, the snow fell around them, and Judith knew that she should



be contented. During her turbulent five years of marriage it had sometimes seemed that, if she could ever get through the dreaded period of separation and divorce, freedom would be heaven. And here she was, free. At last she had time to rest. She relaxed in her soft corner and wondered what on earth she would do with that velvet. Such a mad purchase! Though Judith had married Kirk Leland, she was born a wealthy Jarvis; and the Jarvises never wasted.

"Mr. Appleby is coming to dinner, you remember," said Mrs. Jarvis, "and tomorrow night there is that play at the Orpheum."

It was as if she was trying to remind Judith that life was full of events, and Judith felt ungrateful not to meet her mother's attempt halfway.

"I asked Grace too," Mrs. Jarvis went on. "Perhaps you had better rest before dinner, Judith. You look a little tired."

"Why should I be tired?"

"You're hardly over the strain," said Mrs. Jarvis briefly and kindly. She was always kind to Judith. She had been kind all through the shock of finding that her daughter had married unwisely and that everything which had been done must be undone, that lawyers must be consulted and difficult testimony discussed with them. Just as she had married Judith to Kirk Leland, so she had unmarried her, making both processes as easy as she could.

Judith chose one of her dark dresses for dinner. There were plenty of good ones. She remembered that she had bought another today, and then she wondered when the ivory velvet would be delivered and what on earth she would do with it. She parted her hair accurately and drew it up, loosening it slightly, then pulled it back to her neck, where she twisted it in a coil and fastened it with long bone hairpins. Nothing disturbed her. There was nothing now to break confusingly into her planned routine, no nervous fear of a husband's mood, no jealous question concerning his whereabouts. It was exceedingly comfortable. The *chaise longue*, heaped with cushions, invited her to take that "little rest" her mother had advised, but Judith had lain too often there without resting. She dressed herself in one of the dark dresses, and without much interest made sure that she was neat.

Mr. Appleby beamed on her as she sat across from him an hour later. It was a kind beam, not too warm, not exciting. He was a middle-aged man with thin hair, but personable in a fashion of his own. Mr. Appleby was the junior member of her mother's legal representatives. The senior member of the firm had secured

Judith her divorce in his hushed and competent fashion, and so doubtless Mr. Appleby knew all about her marital troubles. Judith was conscious, as she looked at her mother, sitting so full of possession at the head of the table, that Mrs. Jarvis thought highly of Mr. Appleby and that she thought highly of marriage too.

Cousin Grace, who liked a good dinner and never got too many of them, was eager over the roast duck. Mr. Appleby also had the air of one appreciating some good thing. Among the three of them Judith felt astray. She had been unsettled so long, while the comfort of these three had remained undisturbed. She marked the slight tightness of Mr. Appleby's vest across the front, the tightness of good dining and an easy



She drew in her breath with a gasp, leaning against the wall, opposite her door, was Kirk.

mind, and remembered painfully in one of her secret rushes of memory how lithe and strong Kirk had been. No wonder he was vain.

"What do you think about it, Mrs. Leland?" asked Mr. Appleby. She knew that they were discussing the site of a new home for working-girls. No one of the residence districts was ready to welcome the institution; and a business section would be unsuitable.

"It would depreciate your Elgin Park property, Mrs. Jarvis," said the lawyer wisely. "If I were you, I'd use what influence I could to prevent it."

"What other place is there?" asked Judith.

"On Graves Road."

"Who owns the land there?"

"I don't really know. It's pretty well bought up except the big tract near the park which they are saving for this possible institution."

Judith remembered that Kirk owned apartments and a great deal of land out there. It was part of the Leland estate. Doubtless some of her alimony came from that property, her detested alimony which was so useless to her. But they had all insisted, and she had given in. Kirk was very anxious to give her money, all of his money that she wanted, more than she wanted. It was never money that he had denied her.

Mr. Appleby beamed on her. Mrs. Jarvis looked down the table as if her thought was, as usual, "My poor daughter with the lovely, lovely hair—what a brute the man was!" Cousin Grace, that matronly-looking maiden, glanced occasionally at her divorced kinswoman. It seemed to Judith that her experiences must be written on her face, though she had told so little of them.

In the living-room, later, the badly balanced company of three women and one man played bridge. Mrs. Jarvis her avid woman's game, Cousin Grace her timid, apologetic game, and Judith nervously, in partnership with Mr. Appleby's slow game. Judith was always nervous, though she knew that Mr. Appleby, for all his concessions, did not play well.

He complimented her.

"Well done, Mrs. Leland. That was beautifully played. You surely know the game."

"I lost a trick. It should have been a slam."

She tried to tell him about it, but he put her off with further compliments, pleasant, fulsome, well-rounded compliments. There was no evading his courtesy, and it annoyed Judith. She had played well but made a blunder, and she wanted to get at the thing on its merits, while he buzzed around her with compliments. But he was kind. Kirk would have scowled or sworn under his breath if she had lost that trick. Bridge in his company was nerve-racking.

The evening wore on, hand after hand unimportantly

played. Nobody was greatly excited. They exhausted the hours until eleven o'clock. Cousin Grace and Mrs. Jarvis went upstairs then, for Cousin Grace was spending the night, and Judith was left alone with Mr. Appleby.

"I should go before I outstay my welcome, but it's been such a delightful evening that I hate to see it end."

She smiled at him. The dark dress hung straight from her shoulders. She had a girl's young figure, and in spite of her trouble, her face was unlined. It was a (Continued on page 120)

HARRIS DICKSON has been discovering Hollywood. In Vicksburg, they call him Judge, for he was one once, and the title pursued him to Celluloidia. After a month amid the eucalyptus trees, he was seen hurrying to the Los Angeles railway station, a bag in each hand. Asked if Hollywood had worn him out, the Judge replied: "Worn me out? Hah! Nothing to do here but sleep; I'm going back to Vicksburg, where you get really lively living."



"Hello the house! Hello!" the Francesca lay stiller than a rabbit,

Illustrated by
Ralph Pallen Coleman

The Jungle

By **H a r r i s**

IN jungle brushwood at the margin of Darkwater a woman was hiding, a woman who appeared almost like a child, a beautiful and amusedly excited child, crouching beneath the vines and peering out upon the river. The buzz of a motorboat drew nearer. Through the foliage she could not see it, could only hear its *put-put-put*; and she knelt with head upturned, listening, like some wild creature harkening to a warning of danger. Yet her attitude betrayed no fear—rather, an expectancy of impending drama. Something might happen; and Francesca detested boredom.

One brown arm, bare to the elbow, and most exquisitely modeled, parted the branches in front. There she lay and watched, with black eyes snapping brilliantly.

Francesca had concealed her small body among some rotting logs deposited there by a Mississippi overflow. Above her the hoary moss dangled from every branch of a dying oak. And amidst its beards of trailing gray, as if some withered *roué* had decked himself for dalliance, the scarlet trumpet-flowers twined, flaunting their poisoned loveliness. Twenty feet below Francesca, a black and sluggish river wriggled like a tortuous moccasin. Darkwater could scarcely be called a stream; a stream suggests current, flow, activity, of which there was none. Yet that dead and stagnant water seethed with life. So did Francesca. Motionless though she lay, the hot blood throbbed at Francesca's throat; anticipation tingled at her finger-tips. Somebody was coming; it might be—no telling who.

Into these remote swamps of Louisiana only an occasional trapper ventures. Twice had Francesca observed a dugout—slim and narrow, shaped from a log, and hollowed by fire—a dugout that went slipping noiselessly on its way. Twice she had eyed the same man, a huge, hairy-armed and blond fellow, lumpish, Swedish—Red Eric, the logger, paddling toward his camp. With Red Eric, Francesca had no concern, except that Eric was a man, and all men concerned Francesca. Then, at another time, she had noticed old straggly-whiskered Barker, the fisherman, drifting by lazily

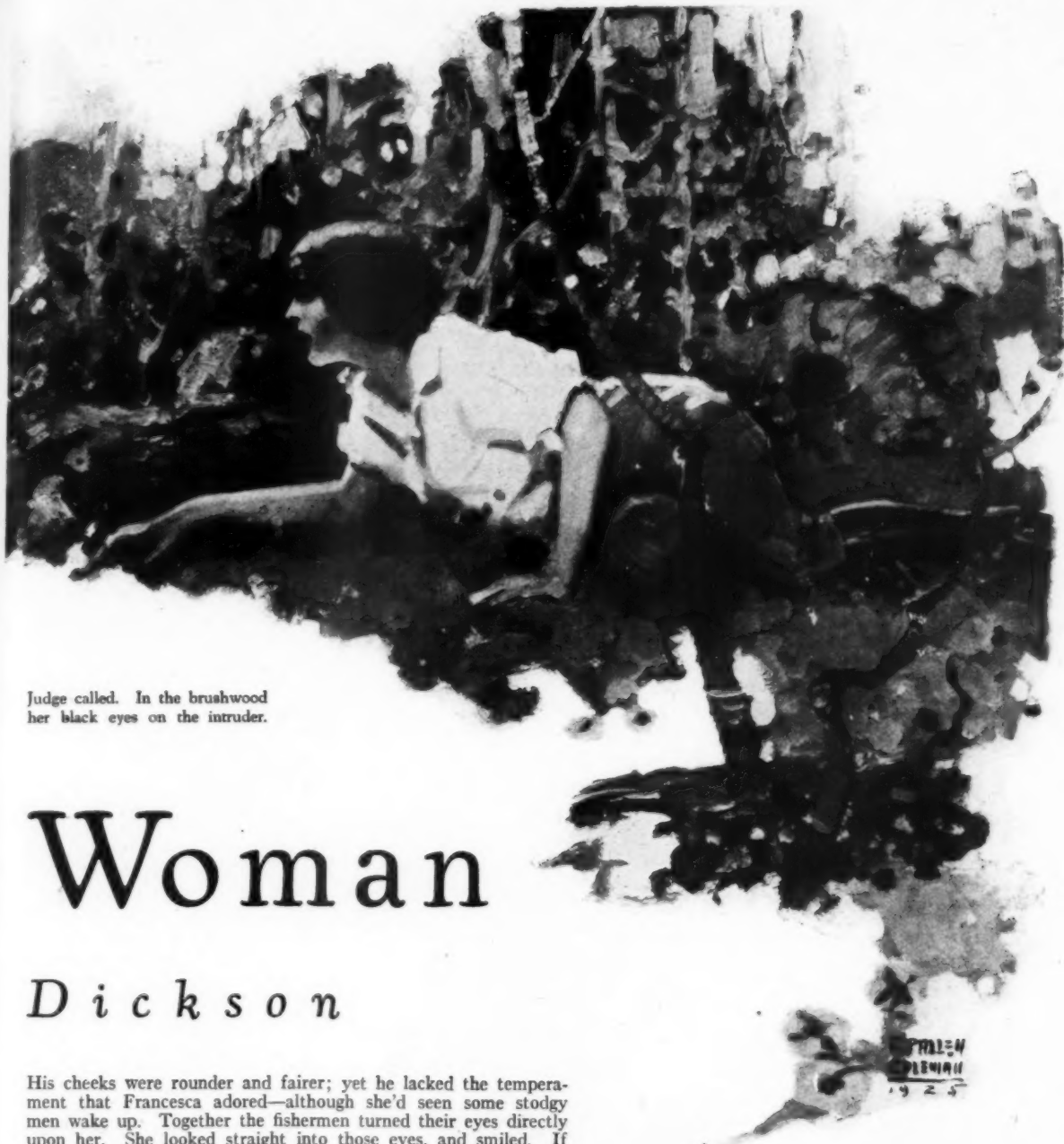
in his skiff. In truth, neither of these men ever came to figure in her affairs, and they were the only two she saw, men who had not even glanced upward at this abandoned Friley cabin, never guessing that so delicious a morsel dwelt within its walls.

Now Francesca heard a motorboat. It must be bringing men, civilized men; and she darted out to see. As for herself, the girl had no dread of discovery. The land at this point stood much higher than the river—as height is counted in Louisiana—and level; from the water so far below, her presence could never be detected. Perfectly safe behind her screen of vines, she'd watch until the boat had passed. *If it passed. If?* Suppose it stopped? The possibilities thrilled her. Suppose? She cast no glance toward the cabin. Even if peril threatened, no help could come from there. For Francesca was alone, and would be alone until a late hour in the afternoon.

The motor noise grew louder. Francesca craned her neck in the selfsame manner that dozens of sunning turtles on the logs below were craning theirs. But unlike the turtles, Francesca did not drop off with a splash when the boat approached.

There! The boat! A dinky craft, flat-bottomed, devised to cruise in shallows. Francesca gave a little gasp, almost of disappointment. The man on the middle seat was old, and rusty-faced with freckles. He wore a wide straw hat, blue cotton shirt, khaki breeches, and fanned his sweaty face. The fan annoyed her. Romance never came in the guise of an old man fanning his sweaty face.

The other man, steering from the rear seat, appeared younger.



Judge called. In the brushwood
her black eyes on the intruder.

Woman

Dickson

His cheeks were rounder and fairer; yet he lacked the temperament that Francesca adored—although she'd seen some stodgy men wake up. Together the fishermen turned their eyes directly upon her. She looked straight into those eyes, and smiled. If they only realized whom they were looking at! Would they be so indifferent? Possibly; and that might prove diverting, as a novelty. Francesca had never experienced the gaze of men who remained callous. Had they but seen her, the younger fisherman might not have nodded in such trivial fashion and said: "There's Friley's, Judge." And the older might not have contented himself with the remark: "Yes, Bob. Three miles to Dead Willows."

However, in blind ignorance, that is what the fishermen did and said. The boat passed on. Francesca rose, with a trace of petulance on her lips, and stepped forth from concealment, a shapely young figure in breeches of Bedford cord, and a ruffled shirt. So jauntily she bore herself on sturdy legs, with such an air of insolent bravado, that it would have been easy to mistake her for a boy—one of those deep-eyed Italian lads who graced the petty courts of old Siena or of Rimini. But one must then forget Francesca's coils of dense black hair, which no man could ignore, or overlook the lure of Francesca's womanhood.

Now that the men were gone, she came back slowly toward her cabin, to the open hallway between its rooms, where stood a trunk and several traveling bags. From the trunk she began unpacking gowns, furs, lingerie and other mysterious paraphernalia. Her fingers caressed the shimmering silks, smoothed out their creases, and hung them upon a rope in the sunshine.

Once she stopped and pouted at the folly of such fripperies in these woods. Then she glanced at a shelf in the hallway, where lay a razor, a mirror, a shaving-brush and strop. Contemplating these evidences of man, Francesca tossed her head and laughed.

For two good hours the happy girl busied herself hanging out dresses, until the line was full. She unfolded her linens and folded them again, with deft little pats. Suddenly she stopped and listened. The motorboat was coming back, not only coming back, but seemed to be slowing down. Again she ran to the riverbank and watched it.

From the secure hiding-place Francesca eyed the oncoming boat, steered by the junior partner, while old Judge Rufus Wardlaw fidgeted and squirmed, for his hot seat scorched him. A blazing sun glared upward from the river and burned the lawyer's red face even redder beneath the brim of a wide straw hat. His blue cotton shirt gaped open at the throat, and he fanned himself with the same palmetto that Francesca had objected to.

Surrounded by fishing-poles and minnow-buckets, old Wardlaw appeared to be exactly what he was, the most amiable of anglers. Yet man cannot live by fish alone. He's bound to smoke. An

hour ago the Judge had dropped their last box of matches into the water, and after long chewing upon an unlighted cigar, he announced: "Bob, I've just *got* to have a match; run back to Friley's, and we'll borrow a few."

"No chance," Bob Ruston growled. "Hasn't been a soul around that shack for a thousand years."

"Might be," the Judge kept insisting. "Old Milton told me that he heard somebody there last week, chopping wood."

Which insignificant conversation afterward became important before the coroner's inquest, to explain why Rufus Wardlaw happened to go ashore, and to see what he actually saw at the abandoned Friley cabin.

At Friley's landing the bluff rises twenty feet above an inky water. On top, the land is level. Through the brushwood they could see the roof of a log cabin. The clearing around it was now grown up in weeds. No human face peered out from its shutterless windows; no human foot wore a path to its threshold. Forbidding and desolate though it was, Judge Wardlaw wanted a match.

Along these sinister meanderings of Darkwater, it is neither courteous nor healthy to pry into a neighbor's affairs. While Bob waited below, his partner scrambled upward through briars, and climbed the shelving bank.

"Hello the house! Hello!" he called as required by local etiquette. After taking a few steps, Judge Wardlaw passed beyond his partner's vision, and Bob could only hear him calling: "Hello! Hello!"

In the brushwood Francesca lay stiller than a rabbit, her black eyes fastened upon the intruder, while Bob Ruston waited and listened from their boat.

It could scarcely have been five minutes before Bob heard a crashing among the weeds above him, then saw the Judge rushing back, with apprehensive glances behind him. Down the bank he hustled, tumbled into their boat and shoved off.

"Get away—*quick!*" he ordered; and Bob could hear him muttering some incoherent yarn about a woman's undergarments.

When they had gained a safe distance, Bob shut off their motor and laughed: "Judge, did you examine the lady's stockings *very* closely?"

"Never had time. Her man was probably lying in the woods examining *me* with a rifle. I left."

"Sure," Bob chuckled. "Left in such a rush that it naturally suggested the husband theory."

The younger lawyer was amused at his partner's escapade, while old Rufus looked very solemn.

"Truth, Bob. A *woman* lives in that cabin."

"Maybe so. All these swamp-rats have their women."

"They don't have *that* kind of lady."

"What kind?" Being on the frisky side of forty, Bob itched to hear. "What did she look like?"

The Judge shifted his seat, opening his collar, mopped the sweat from his bald head, and fanned himself.

"Didn't see the lady," he admitted; "only saw her clothes-line, with more stylish toggery than you ever laid eyes on—riding-habits, dinner-gowns, silk stockings, and no end of expensive furs, hanging out in the sunshine."

"Stolen, of course!" Bob the pagan sneered.

"Don't think so. Her gowns have all been worn, and seemed fitted to the same figure, a devilish pretty figure, I take it, too. Who do you suppose she can be?"

"None of my business."

For a while both the puzzled fishermen sat in silence, munching their still unlit cigars, and when the motor started again, old Wardlaw tormented his curiosity by staring backward at Friley's cabin as far as he could see it.

Two miles at top speed carried them around Cooter Point, where they came in sight of a four-by-four platform, most precariously built over the water, a skiff's length from shore. A half-dozen planks, supported by poles driven in the mud—that was all. On it sat a motionless human figure.

"Bob," the Judge pointed, "suppose we run by Hogue's. He might be able to tell us something."

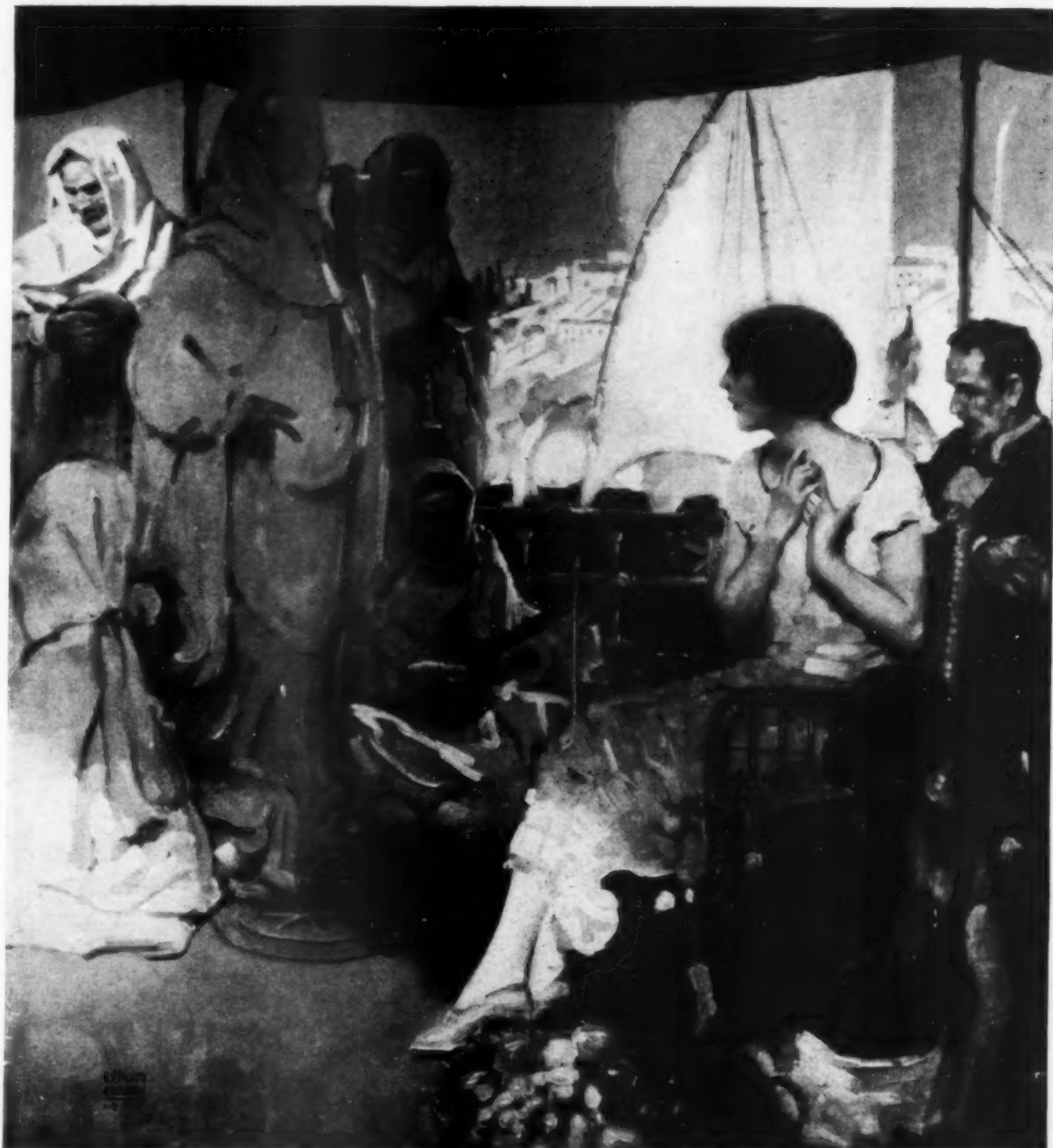
This professional fisherman called Hogue was badly in need of scissors. Uncombed locks tangled about his shoulders. Whiskers and silence enveloped him. As the motorboat drew alongside, Hogue never budged from his stool, with knees drawn up beneath his chin, and heels propped upon its rung. And though not boisterous in his welcome, Hogue's blue eyes regarded this pair with more than common toleration. They were his personal attorneys. Not long ago the Judge had outtalked a constable in his behalf; and since then, if Hogue spoke of them at all, he mentioned Wardlaw and Ruston as "my lawyers."

"Hogue," Wardlaw queried as he grappled the platform to hold his boat, "who are those new folks at Friley's?"

"Don't know, Lawyer." The bearded fisherman smoked on, and



The other two seemed attempting to capture Hogue's diary by force. "Stand clear!" he ordered.



"One tall young Arab stared at Francesca until she recognized him, in his turban and his darkened face. Branscombe!"

spat into the water. Five poles, fastened in cracks of the platform, dangled their lines; five cork floats swam lazily upon the surface of the water. That was Hogue's job, to catch buffalo fish, not to talk.

"You haven't seen the strangers?" Wardlaw persisted.

"Nope."

"Well, if you hear anything about them, tell me."

"All right, Lawyer. So long." The fisherman never moved nor turned an eye as their motorboat went chugging on its way to the clubhouse.

Darkwater Club is no fancily painted bungalow, but a rough board shanty that overlooks the black and winding water. Its porch is the rendezvous for fishermen. Tonight there were only two. After supper Judge Wardlaw sat gazing out upon the river, and finally broke silence.

"Bob, I know a lot about that lady." Then in answer to his partner's inquiring eyes he added:

"She's near five feet three, a brilliant brunette with flashing black eyes, exquisite little feet and hands. Highly educated, has traveled everywhere. Speaks French and Italian. Of a romantic temperament, loves poetry, and—"

"What?" Bob Ruston snorted. "Where'd you get all that rot?"

"It's no rot, Bob—plain horse sense. Can't I look at a woman's dresses and guess her size? She's a little bit of a trick. Had twenty pair of shoes sunning on the gallery, and you couldn't squeeze your big toe into a slipper. Her gowns are mostly reds, scarlets, flame-colors—which would make a blonde look putty-faced. She's traveled? Yes. Two steamer trunks plastered with hotel labels from all over the world. Educated? Must be. Ignorant fishwomen can't read Molière in French, and Tasso in Italian. Both those volumes were lying on a bench, her glove between the pages of one for a bookmark. Looked like a doll's glove. Call *that* rot?" he exclaimed triumphantly.

These details were afterward testified to by Judge Wardlaw before the coroner's jury, who were forced to accept his deductions. That was all the information that anybody could get.

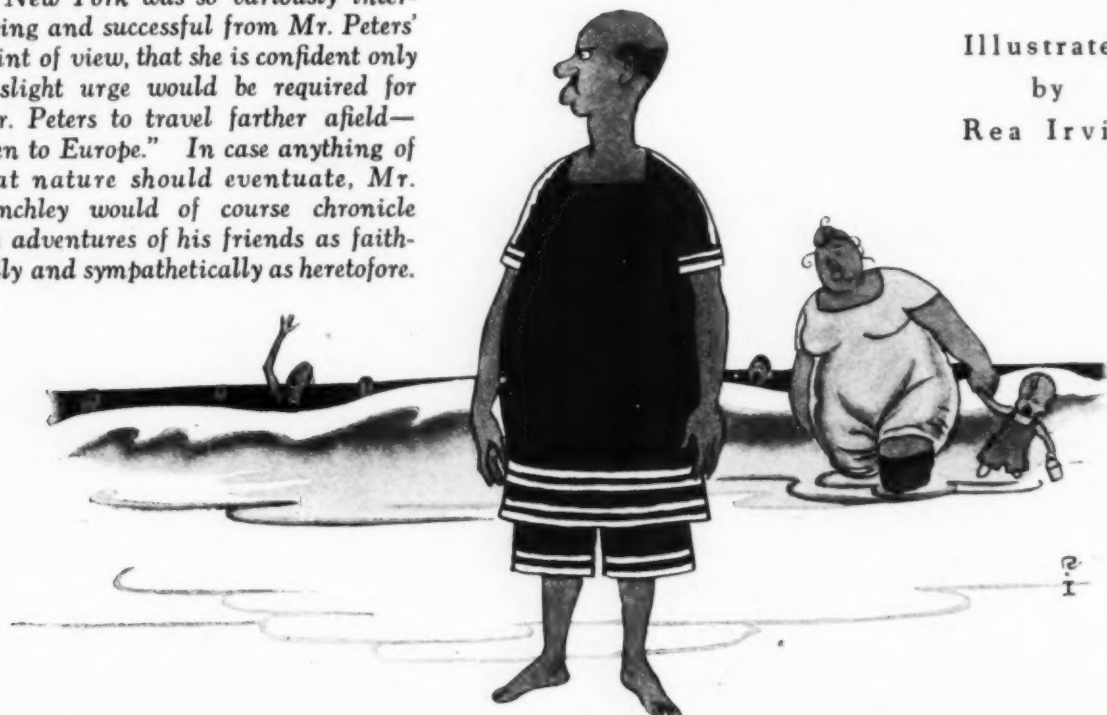
THIS first evidence of an unknown woman at Friley's had been discovered on April 5th. Between that tantalizing date and June 12th, old Wardlaw had failed to satisfy his inquisitiveness.

Wardlaw and Ruston, attorneys at (Continued on page 149)

They Asked

"MRS. PETERS informs me," writes Mr. Benchley, "that their trip to New York was so variously interesting and successful from Mr. Peters' point of view, that she is confident only a slight urge would be required for Mr. Peters to travel farther afield—even to Europe." In case anything of that nature should eventuate, Mr. Benchley would of course chronicle the adventures of his friends as faithfully and sympathetically as heretofore.

Illustrated
by
Rea Irvin



IN Dyke, Ohio, where Mr. and Mrs. Walter Peters live, the most intimate association with the Atlantic Ocean is that furnished by the Film News feature showing Monster Waves in Wake of Storm Beating Against Breakwater at Swampscott, Mass. From these pictures, Mrs. Peters had formed an unfavorable impression of the Great Trade Route and Bathing Playground.

But since the Peters' were in New York for a visit, and since they had seen everything else indigenous to Manhattan, whether they liked it or not, it seemed only fair to Nature and one of her major works to take a dash to the ocean's edge and at least comment on its size.

In the mind of the transient, New York's sole outlet to the sea is through Coney Island. So it is in the minds of about a million of the natives. The rest of the natives don't know that New York has an outlet to the sea, and pack up and go to Maine or New Jersey when they want to do a little surf-bathing. So it was to Coney Island that the Peters' naturally turned, and it was to Coney Island that they bought tickets on the boat leaving the Battery at two on a hot June afternoon.

The same idea had occurred simultaneously to about three thousand other people, all of good, healthy, child-bearing stock, and even before the boat had left the pier, she was loaded to the gunwales with parents and children, each parent with two children, each child with two oranges. The Peters' were fortunate enough to have their chairs wedged in between those of a considerable family, *père, mère* and vibrant children, the elders naturalized Americans, the kiddies native-born, constituting between them a vertebra in the backbone of the nation. What with the excitement of leaving home and the need for early embarkation, they had postponed luncheon until now, and were soon busy in the preparation and demolition of a frugal meal consisting of fruits (in season), hard-boiled eggs *Bercie*, fudge-bars and cookies. One of the children decided to use Mr. Peters' knee as a take-off in its attack on a particularly difficult orange.

Now, in theory, Mr. Peters was fond of children. He had often patted neighbors' children on their heads as he passed

them on the street in Dyke. He tried to remember this as he felt the juice of the battered fruit soaking through his trousers. He tried to remember that this was just a child, and that of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. He even tried to recall his own childhood, and to say to himself good-naturedly: "I was just like that when I was a kid." But it was of no avail. He felt a desire to slap coming on.

"What's that?" asked the child—who had not been a clean child to begin with, and was now in a state bordering on vegetation owing to the misplacement of food and what-not. This question was accompanied by a lunge at Mr. Peters' watch-chain, a Masonic emblem of generous proportions.

Mr. Peters hesitated between replying, "None of your business!" and giving a civil answer. He was saved the choice by a remark from the mother, who gave up worrying her orange long enough to beam, "Five years old!" at Mr. Peters.

There wasn't much that Mr. Peters could say to this except to express indifferent astonishment by raising the eyebrows, and a definite concern for his trousers by moving his knee from under the fruit deposit.

"He loves men," said the mother, determined that Mr. Peters should know exactly why he was being favored with the attentions of her offspring.

"He has his father," suggested Mr. Peters, hopeful of establishing an *Edipus* complex in the child which would relieve him of the necessity of deliberately assaulting it.

But the father was busy shucking an egg for a little girl and was in no mood to play his end of the game; so Mr. Peters patted his little new-found friend on the head with such force as to bring on a violent headache, and picking up his camp-stool, moved to another part of the deck.

The boat was, by this time, well under way, and everyone was settled and shipshape. Groups of young people, youths and maidens, were in the majority, and while youths and maidens on a lark should be a sight to stir the sap and awaken a sympathetic understanding in even the hardest of arteries, just as the romp-

for It

By

Robert C. Benchley

ings of Strephons and Phyllises have inspired writers of idyls in the past, somehow on a Coney Island boat their gayety and animal spirits becomes a bit wearing. Possibly it is because poets can stand on a hilltop and watch Strephon and Phyllis romping down in the daisy-decked fields below, while on a Coney Island boat they are practically in your lap. At any rate, Mr. Peters found them even less restful than the friendly infant had been.

In the party next to which the Peters' finally found themselves, Strephon was showing off before Phyllis and Bess by snatching Robin's hat from his head and putting it on his own, following this masquerade by a gesture as if to throw it overboard. Robin carried out his end of the romp by lunging after Strephon across Mr. Peters' shoulders and attempting to pull out his assailant's necktie. At this Phyllis and Bess screamed with glee.

A boy came by selling maps of Long Island Sound, regardless of the fact that Long Island Sound does not figure in the ship's course to Coney Island. He also had chocolate almond bars for those who were not interested in maps. There had evidently at some time or other also been a big demand for strings to keep hats from blowing overboard, for he had a large assortment of these which he offered hopefully. Being something of a student of human nature in his way, he went on the theory that simply because a passenger did not want a map or an almond bar or a hat string at two-forty-five, that was no sign that at three o'clock he might not have changed his mind and want all three. So at intervals of fifteen minutes he approached the crowd in



general, and Mr. Peters in particular, with a fresh inducement to buy, until Mrs. Peters, watching her husband nervously out of the corner of her eye, feared that their little sail down the harbor might result in a horrible catastrophe before the Statue of Liberty was passed.

As a matter of fact, this was probably averted only by her suggestion that they go below and see the engines. There, in the oily retreat, far from the particularly maddening crowd, the Peters' stood and watched the smooth gliding of the pistons, until the bumping and yelling outside announced to them that they were in a fair way to escape from what had become to them a fair imitation of a floating hell.

The day being warm and the ocean blue, the first thing that suggested itself to Mr. Peters as a relief from all that he had been through was a plunge into the surf. He had some idea of perhaps plunging in and swimming straight out to sea and never returning, but that was merely a fleeting mood of cowardice. The spirit of *revanche* was too strong in Mr. Peters to permit of his giving up a struggle simply because

he had met with initial discouragement. So, picking out a spot on the beach where Mrs. Peters might sit and watch and perhaps get painfully sunburned, he made his way to a large bathhouse which advertised suits and towels and personal service. Equipped with the towel and suit and eager for the personal service, Mr. Peters at last found his bathhouse at the end of the third alley on the right from the second alley on the left from the first alley as you enter the reservation. It was a locker-room with perhaps two dozen other patrons sharing it, all in various unat-

REA IRVIN.



tractive stages of dressing or undressing. It was necessary for Mr. Peters to locate an attendant before he could get his locker open, and it was necessary to locate the attendant again before he could lock it. As the attendant was constantly engaged in wringing out bathing suits several miles down the alley, this was no small tax on Mr. Peters' patience. And taxes on Mr. Peters' patience came high, as many New Yorkers had already found out to their sorrow—nay, destruction.

Mr. Peters, in addition to being of a mercurial nature and easily aroused, was also an extremely modest man. His modesty, in so far as he disliked appearing in dishabille before a second person, sprang from a combination of New England ancestors and the fact that he had funny legs. His instinct and his pride were both against undressing in front of anyone. And here he was, thrown into a den with a dozen and a half companions, and expected to disrobe. He remembered with chagrin that he had on that effeminate undershirt with half-sleeves, the one that had come back once in his laundry by mistake.

Determined to get the thing over as quickly as possible, Mr. Peters tore his clothes off in something resembling a panic. He had removed them all except the half-sleeved undershirt, when his neighbor, a large, fat man with a towel wrapped ineffectually around his waist, decided that this unsociability had gone far enough.

"Water's great today," he volunteered. "Little cold at first, but great after you get in."

Mr. Peters dropped the bathing-suit he was about to step into and turned.

"That's good," he said.

"Been in before this year?" asked the conversationalist.

"No," said Mr. Peters, making his a short but comprehensive answer.

"This is my fifth swim this month," said the man. "I come down every night in summer. It sets me up for work next day. If I don't get my swim every day in the summer, I'm no good."

"And if you do get it, what are you?" asked Mr. Peters testily.

"Tip-top," said his friend. Then, fearing that he had not made himself clear, he repeated: "Tip-top."

"That's fine," said Mr. Peters.

"Have you been in already today?" continued the man.

"Not yet," replied Mr. Peters.

"What you getting dressed for, then?"

Mr. Peters looked. The man was right. In his embarrassment, he had begun to put on his street-clothes again instead of his bathing suit. He was almost half dressed.

"I have changed my mind about going in," was all that he could think of in explanation of what was obviously an impossible situation. And to carry the thing out, it was necessary for him to continue dressing, take his suit away, and hide behind the bathhouse until his frankly puzzled friend had dried himself, dressed and gone home, in tip-top shape for work the next day.

Mr. Peters thought some of giving the whole thing up rather than go through all the undressing again, but he was riled and bitter, and the old Peters streak of stubbornness was too strong even for his modesty and frustration. So he dashed back into the locker-room and in four minutes was clad in a bathing-suit two sizes too large for him, pattering down to the sand to find Mrs. Peters.

This was no small task—finding Mrs. Peters. He had designated a spot by a large red umbrella near the entrance to the bathhouses where she was to sit and wait for him. On emerging upon the beach, he found eight large red umbrellas within a radius of fifty yards of the entrance, and a dozen more in the outlying regions. Under none of them was Mrs. Peters. Once he thought he saw her and ran up with the beginnings of a caustic remark on his lips, but the sun in his eyes had confused him and it turned out to be a strange lady who showed signs of being insulted at his advances.

By this time, Mr. Peters was in a rage and a panic at the same time, and ran madly up and down the beach with clenched fists. Never before, in all his homicidal fits, had he lusted after his wife's blood, but had he found her at this moment, he might well have added her to his list of victims. However, he did not find her.

Into the water then he went, determined to get that swim if it was the last thing he did before going to the electric chair. Perhaps he would drown, and then Mrs. Peters would be sorry. Or perhaps she wouldn't be sorry. Perhaps she had gone off with one of those mahogany-veneer life-guards and was waiting for just such a contingency. This suspicion of his wife's faithfulness showed in what a state Mr. Peters was, for it was nothing short of madness even to dream of such a breach. Had Mrs. Peters been going to leave Mr. Peters, she would have left him years ago when he first started to murdering people that he didn't like.

As the man in the locker-room had said, the water was cold when you first went in. Mr. Peters stood shivering with the fringe of a wave swirling around his ankles. Something must have happened to the Gulf Stream in the night, switching the whole Labrador Current down along the Atlantic coast. And those women who were in up to their waists just ahead of him: what did they find to scream about with such glee? They screamed when the waves struck them, and they screamed when no wave

was near. They held each other's hands and ducked up and down screaming, until Mr. Peters was almost ready to brave the icy water and plunge in to strangle them until they had something to scream about. What a sex! What a world, in fact!

And as he stood there, growing blue by the second, acutely conscious of the fact that several young girls behind him were making mock of his legs, the final straw was laid on the weight which oppressed his frenzy. Two young men, chasing each other through the shallow water, swished down on him, and one of them, inspired by that demon which governs young men in the water, kicked as much of the

ocean as he could raise with his foot, with some idea of hitting his playmate. Mr. Peters, with his back to the frolickers, received the shower full in the middle of his shivering back.

With a wild cry of rage, he rushed up the beach and into the bathing pavilion. Through the maze of corridors he tore, looking frantically for his number, 1145. Here were 1120, 1122, 1124, 1126. Then a turn. The next number was 1102. He wheeled and saw 1218, 1220, 1222. He wheeled again and saw 1478, 1480 and 1482. With staring eyes he groped his way back to where he had started from. Here he found 1144—and next to it 1146.

"What has become of 1145 while I have been in the water?" he asked of an attendant.

(Continued on page 134)



Miss Synon knows her Parmenter Street as you know the palm of your own hand; and the Irish hearts of that obscure thoroughfare are as easy for her to read as the evening paper. Her Chicago is the Chicago of the little people—the people of the Yards, of the near West Side and of the little skip-stop streets far out along the traction lines.

By

Mary
Synon

"Don't be in too great a hurry," she advised. "You may be a long time married."



Queen o'the May

Illustrated by Herman Pfeifer

IN April, Chicago of State Street shops and shifts and surges past the busiest corner in the world. Chicago of Michigan Avenue sweeps in opulent argosy beyond high buildings and over sluggish river to gleaming crescent of shore-line and burgeoning green of park. Chicago of the Gold Coast starts early hegira to Paris. Chicago of the river wards sets out upon other vagabond highways to toil on railway sections and in lumber camps. Chicago of Parmenter Street stays at home; and so Mollie Collins, born and bred in that drab thoroughfare on the southwestern prairies of the sprawling city, had to find springtime in the dusty lilacs of the little square she passed every weekday on her way from work at the Yards, in the wind from the south, heavy though it came with the smoke of myriad chimneys and engines, and in the April wistfulness of her own young heart.

That heart, though not worn upon her trim sleeve, slipped into third speed as she came down the broad avenue which bisects Packingtown, and caught sight of John Darrah waiting for her at the gates. From the time she could remember the dull gray houses of Parmenter Street, she had known the boy who had lived

across that wide and dismal expanse which Midwestern weather made snow or mud or dust through the hastening seasons. She had romped with him, gone to school with him, fought with him, sought him, shunned him, gone through the whole gamut of emotions of girlhood toward boyhood, only to fall head over heels in love with him when she saw the gayer of the O'Malley twins beginning to cast languishing glances in his unconscious direction. She flirted with other men,—Mollie Collins flirted as easily as she breathed,—but she watched John Darrah with hawk-like intentness, and sometimes smiled on him with dizzying tenderness. The smiles were earning their reward. For the fourth time in a week the slim, straight, gray-eyed young man, boast of Parmenter Street and pride of his widowed mother's life, was waiting for her in the home-going throng, and Mollie's soul sang a paean of joy as she walked toward him.

She concealed her gladness deftly, however, under the guise of an almost too casual friendliness. But, "Going my way?" she shot at him merrily as they swung out with other thousands of young men and women just released from offices and plants, the

concourse of laboring youth which mans the Union Stock Yards. The rush of color to his face set her glowing with triumph at her power over him, and she fell into step beside him with rioting pulses. "Had a hard day?" she asked him, and ignored the elaborate bow which Wally Welch, sleek as a wet rat, bestowed on her from the sidewalk parking space.

"They're never hard," John Darrah said, and she thrilled to the strength which brought him unwearied from the labor of the long day.

"They wouldn't be for you," she told him with flattering discernment which subtly suggested that she found them difficult. She had just caught sight of Edna O'Malley, and she knew that Edna's roving eye would soon find John. With Edna, finders were keepers. "Let's go this way," Mollie urged, and turned into a side-street. Out of the crowd she drew breath of relief, reflecting that discretion was an underrated virtue. "You're so strong," she gave John tribute with swiftly uplifted eyes.

"Sure, I am." He took it as due, and his own look down at her softened. The gold of an April sunset, mirrored in tens of thousands of windows of ugly houses, radiated glory upon them as they walked through the glow, framing them with a nimbus of romance. Shabby, a little work-worn for all their bravery, toiling children of a great city, they were uplifted for the moment into the ecstasy of eternal beauty. Their eyes, finding each other, confessed the love which their words had not yet uttered. John Darrah's hand closed over Mollie's. "Oh," she breathed. "Oh!" The grasp of his fingers tightened. In the silence of awe before revelation they passed the square where the dusty lilacs bloomed, and found the homeward way transfigured by their mounting emotions.

Only when they had come to the crossing of Parmenter Street did the spell upon them loosen its hold. Mollie, conscious of the chance of watching eyes, drew away her hand, but their eyes met again in rejoicing. "All right," he said exultantly. "I'll be over at half-past seven," he told her as they came to the little cottage where she lived. "I'll be waiting," she said, and watched him cross the street to the tiny weatherbeaten house where she knew his mother was making ready his dinner.

For the moment, transfigured by the glory of love, Mollie felt a softening tenderness for Mrs. Darrah, that little old woman who went up and down Parmenter Street like a wasp, starting trouble with one word, and doubling it with another. Smooth of tongue, sympathetic of manner, she could surpass even Kate Bannon for her ability to embitter the neighborhood, and with Agnes Monahan and Mary Kate Cunningham, the Collinses could testify to Mrs. Darrah's power of brewing dissension. Had she pondered on anything but John, Mollie could have found a hundred reasons for dread of his mother, but with the memory of John's touch still pounding on her pulses, she wrapped his mother in the mantle of her happiness until her father's voice, acid with his usual sardonic amusement at the human comedy, aroused her.

"Ye'd better be lookin' out," Daniel Collins gave unsolicited advice as she entered the house, "or Mrs. Darrah'll be in your bobbed hair. She doesn't like girls to be castin' sheep's-eyes at her Johnny."

"I wasn't," said Mollie hotly.

"It's the third time runnin' he's come home with ye." He peered at her smilingly over the top of his evening newspaper. "I suppose ye'll be goin' to Durnan's Hall with him next."

"I don't go to Durnan's."

Her father nodded.

Mrs. Collins, sad of eye, sad of mouth, sad of shoulder, gave her daughter a glance of ingrained gloom from where she stood over the kitchen stove. "Aren't you tired, darlin'?" she asked mournfully.

"Not a bit," the girl exulted; then, moved by some newly

aroused understanding of the lot of womankind, she went over to her mother and kissed her. The tears came to Mrs. Collins' eyes. "You're a good girl, Mollie," she told her, "but I suppose I'll be losin' you soon."

"Can't I walk home with a boy without having you think that?"

"I didn't see you with anyone. Only some one was sayin' today that she supposed it wouldn't be long till you'd be runnin' off with Wally Welch."

"Wally Welch? Why, he hasn't even a job."

"Girls sometimes marry men without jobs." She turned the meat in the frying-pan with the air of a priestess offering sacrifice to a goddess of misery.



"I won't. Who said it?"

"Mrs. Darrah."

"Mrs. Darrah? What does she know about me?"

"What does she know about everyone?"

"Well, I'm not going to marry Wally."

"I've heard girls say the likes of that before."

"Oh, Ma, forget it. What are we going to have for dinner?"

"Nothing much, and it's supper. Come on; it's ready now. Call himself."

Himself, having waded through a long grace, ate with relish. Mrs. Collins, despite her sadness, did not scorn the food she had prepared; but Mollie, lifted by her mood of remembrance of her homeward walk, barely touched her meal. "What's troublin' ye?" her father asked shrewdly.

"I'm not hungry."

"Ye've never known hunger," he said, almost bitterly, and launched into a tale of the Irish Famine, growing so absorbed in his own recital that he gave Mollie no further notice, even when she left the table and went to change her dress in anticipa-

tion of her evening with John Darrah. "Are you goin' out?" her mother asked her. "For a little while," she answered. She primped and powdered, and decked herself valiantly in her gayest gown, only to tear it off for one less conspicuous. "I'm not going to look like a new saloon," she told herself.

She slipped out quietly to the doorstep lest her father tease her again if he saw John's coming. Dusk had fallen over the street. Lights gleamed from the windows, and she could see through the narrow panes the panorama of commonplace existence. Night after night through her girlhood she had watched the scene with eyes which had grown hot in protest against its inevitability. How she had hated the grind of it! How she had loathed the

"There's no hurry," said Mary Kate easily. "There's never hurry for anything, if we're only wise enough."

"When the light of the dawn—"

she sought to continue, but Mollie was not heeding her. John Darrah was crossing the street, and she was rising to greet him. "Well, well," Mrs. Cunningham chuckled, then fell into thought of a new versification of the eternal theme as she went around the house to Mrs. Collins.

"Was she saying 'Like the star in the west'?" John questioned as Mollie stood beside him. Their laughter over Mary Kate's



A girl tossed a veil over her head, gave her a bouquet. "You're lovely." The man in white pointed. "You stand there."

sight of the Bannons crowded in their kitchen; of Mary Kate Cunningham, widowed and alone, washing her few dishes; of Miles Monahan, with his policeman's tramp, on his nightly round to Coghlan's; of Quinn Morrison studying under the ghastly gaslight; of the O'Malley twins clearing the table; of Mrs. Darrah sidling in and out of back doors with her pretense of borrowing or returning while she retailed the day's gossip to busier women! Now, in the high tide of young love, she saw Parmenter Street not beautiful, but somehow hopeful, and life a brave course. So rapt was she that she did not see Mary Kate Cunningham until that tall woman had spoken twice to her.

"Faith, 'tis beautiful to be young," Mary Kate intoned. "'Tis a long time since I sat in the dark, gazing up at the brightness of Venus, and dreaming dreams of true love. That was at Ballyshannon where I stood at the hedge before my father's house. I wrote a poem of it. I'll say it for you." She swayed back and forth, her tall form rocking, as she recited:

"Like the star in the west that shines over the sea,
So my true love gleams bright above life's misery,
And though the dark waters of sorrow may roll,
The joy of my life ever beacons my soul—"

"That's grand, Mrs. Cunningham," Mollie told her, hoping to stave off the other twenty stanzas ere John came. "I think my mother wants to see you."

poetry seemed to bring them in closer bond. "She's said that every spring since I can remember."

"I guess she must have loved him a lot."

"I guess so," he said, half shyly. "Let's walk," he urged her.

They drifted out of Parmenter Street, and as if without design, strolled toward the square they had passed on their homeward way from work. A warm wind, blowing from the prairies to the southward, flung at them a promise of springtime not altogether voided by stone and brick. A moon, just past newness, hung over the dark flat line of roofs. "I forgot to wish on it this month," Mollie said.

"Wish on it now."

"I don't know what to wish."

"I'll tell you."

"What?"

He made no answer until they had come within the shadow of a little group of poplars in the corner of the park. From beyond the square came to them the hum of the city, powerful

and rapid as the thrum of a motor. To north and south and east the sky gleamed luminous with the reflection of millions of man-made lights, but the west gave outlook of solitude, of wider spaces, and it was to the west they looked. For a moment it seemed to Mollie that her soul was speeding with John Darrah's over limitless plains to some high mountain of bliss. Then he turned to her, swung her into his arms, and kissed her with a reverence that brought the tears to her eyes. She had been kissed before,—what pretty girl who knew the dance-halls hadn't been?—but no man had given her in his kisses the adoration which this boy whom she had known all her years was giving her; and to none of them had she ever given the response of tenderness and promise, of joy and sorrow, of fear and desire, of fire and dew which she gave him. "I love you," he said at last with trembling lips. "I love you," she told him while her arms clung to his shoulders.

"I guess I've always loved you," John said as they found a bench and sat close in strangely exalted silence.

"Have you?" she asked dreamily, but there flashed through her quick brain the thought that he might have made the same decision about Edna O'Malley, had she not helped him to find this truth. "I hope you always will," she said with a little catch of breath.

"Mollie!" His voice quivered. "You know I will."

"I—I hope so."

"I won't let anything hurt you, ever," he promised.

"Nothing much could—but you."

"I wouldn't."

"Let's forget about it," she pleaded. "Let's just be happy."

With the eagerness of city youth that knows its own brief blossoming time, she was snatching the essence of her hour. "John, dear," she sighed, and stroked his hair.

"I'm making twenty-eight dollars a week," he told her with an irrelevance which was only apparent, "and on that—"

"We won't talk about it—tonight."

"All right." His laugh held power. "There's tomorrow night, and the night after."

"What'll your mother say?"

In the instant of his silence Mollie's heart ceased to beat; and his assertion, "Why, she'll be glad!" brought her no conviction. Ever since John Darrah had donned long trousers, his mother's dread of his marriage had been the joke of the elders of Parmenter Street. Mrs. Darrah's phrase, "There's no one of them good enough for my Johnny," had long since become a byword. "The queen regent," Daniel Collins had called her; and she had justified the name by royal assumption of the prerogative of choosing her successor. They had all laughed at it, the O'Malleys, Stella Bannon, Eva Morrison, and Mollie leading in the laughter. Now, with realization of what Mrs. Darrah's attitude portended to her own future, she shivered a little. John's arms swung over her protectingly, but she arose. "It's cold," she said. The spell had been broken.

They went back in quiet, only to find Daniel Collins smoking on the doorstep. "Sit down," he invited John; but the younger man would not linger, although the look he gave Mollie mingled flame and yearning. "It seems to me," her father said between ruminative puffs on his reeking pipe as he watched John's back, "that ye're losin' your way a lot. That's the second time tonight he's brought ye home. Well, 'tis all right as long as the queen regent doesn't see him doin' it."

"What can she do?" She sought to drown foreboding in defiance.

"Plenty," said Daniel Collins.

THAT Mrs. Darrah could do plenty became evident in less than an hour. Mrs. Collins was mending in the kitchen, with Mollie reading at the table near her, when the little old woman came in as if blown by a gale, her thin shawl drawn tightly around her narrow shoulders, her scanty hair tossed by the wind. "Can you give me three spoonfuls of coffee, woman dear?" she piped her inevitable greeting. "I didn't know I was out, and I might as well kill my Johnny as ask him to go to work without his pot of coffee. I could do for myself with the tea, but he—"

"I'll get it," Mrs. Collins said. "Wont you be sittin' down?"

"I can't stay but the minute." She took a chair, throwing a little nod toward Mollie. "Are you sick," she demanded of her, "to be in at this time o' night?"

"No. Why?"

"Sure, all the girls and boys are great for gallivantin' these days. There's my Johnny, now, just gone out this minute to take some girl to a dance."

"I didn't know he danced." It was a lie, she reflected, this

statement of his mother's, an arrow sped to stab her, but for the instant the ache from its poison hurt as poignantly as if the dart had been tipped with truth.

"He's learnin'," said Mrs. Darrah. She shut down her mouth as if to conceal a secret. "Edna O'Malley's growin' into a likely girl," she added.

"She doesn't hold a candle to Edith," Mrs. Collins volunteered in serene unconsciousness of the battle before her.

"A woman'd think so," Mrs. Darrah said, "but I notice the boys like Edna. Well, God bless you for your kindness, Mrs. Collins dear. I hope you'll repay your mother, Mollie, for all the work she does for you."

"She'll be runnin' off just when she could be a help," Mrs. Collins sighed.

Mrs. Darrah flashed a look of razor sharpness. "Don't be in too great a hurry," she advised. "Take the good times while you can. You may be a long time married." She drew her shawl closer about her as she stood up. "I'll bring this back tomorrow on my way from Grogan's."

MOLLIE, in the darkness of her own tiny room, cast out thought of Mrs. Darrah's barbs to revel in the recollection of John's love. From dream to dream she rose to heights of self-abnegation until her final prayer, just before she fell asleep, was a plea to die, if need be, for John Darrah's happiness. . . . She awoke, however, with avid desire for life, and went through the day in thrilled anticipation of meeting her lover at the gate. Her fingers raced over her typewriter keys as her brain raced over thoughts of happiness. Again she went toward the gate in joyous hope of meeting John; but her heart sank into misery when she saw Edna O'Malley standing beside him.

Edna, pretty, vivid, voluble, attached herself to them with the surety of popularity, not heeding the glance which passed between the two of them. The Outriders, she announced, were having a dance at Durnan's that night. "Want to come?" she asked John, and only laughed at his outright refusal of the invitation. "You're like Edith," she shrugged scorn of her twin, "getting too high-toned for Durnan's; but honest, I like it. There's more fun in a night in that old hall than in a week at Elysium. That's Mollie's beat." She said it without malice, but Mollie flushed angrily. "Elysium's all right," she said sharply, and lapsed into a silence which held till they had come to Parmenter Street.

"See you tonight?" John contrived to ask her under the hail of Edna's chatter.

"No," she said, driven to denial by hurt that he had somehow failed to lose Edna before their parting. Under the pain in his eyes she relented, but too late. "All right," he said, and left her.

Dinner over, Mollie pined around the house restlessly, wishing she had not let pique rule her. Now she wouldn't see John until tomorrow night, and the hours stretched forward drearily. She was just deciding to go out on the chance of running into him, when his mother came once more to the kitchen doorway, a tiny package of coffee in her hand. "I won't be stayin' at all," she declared. "I can't be leavin' the house alone, and my Johnny's gone off to a dance with Edna O'Malley." She did not seem to look at Mollie, but the girl could feel the sharpness of her silence, and straightened herself on guard. "Maybe you're goin' to it yourself?" Mrs. Darrah queried.

"Not to that one," she said. "I'm going to Elysium."

"They tell me that's a grand place," said the old woman.

"It'll do," said Mollie. She turned to her own room, flung out of her working clothes, and into the gayest garb of her wardrobe, reddening cheeks and lips to conceal the pallor of her dejection. So that was John Darrah's devotion! Taking Edna O'Malley to a dance the night after he had told her he loved her! What if she had said she wouldn't see him? It didn't mean that she was going out with some one else. Did he call this love? She'd show him, she told herself hotly. She didn't have to sit by the stove while he danced. She'd find Wally Welch in the pool-room at the corner, and she'd dance, dance, dance! She sped out of the house and down the street as if driven by the furies.

Under the yellow light of the pool-room Wally Welch was wielding a languid cue. He threw it aside at her summons from the door, strutting toward her with conscious vanity. "Do you want to take me to Elysium?" she asked him hastily.

"You're on," he told her, and went back for his coat.

As she waited, she had a stirring impulse to turn back. She didn't like Wally. He was lazy, shiftless, getting a precarious living from his mother's softness toward him and from a rather doubtful skill with cue and cards; but he danced with the grace of a Valentino, and John Darrah hated him with all the strength



"It's awful," Mollie cried. "Sure," he agreed, "but I love Mary Kate. Here's the chorus."

of the soul Mollie had once thought honest. "If he goes with Edna, I'll go with Wally," she prodded herself out of doubt, and laughed and joked with her cavalier as they boarded the street-car for the dance-hall.

Elysium, pleasure palace for those thousands of boys and girls to whom dancing is the alpha and omega of joy, of excitement, of the little social life they ever attain, spread out carpets of light for their nimble feet as they joined the crowd at its doorway. Gay, festive, blaring, it gave them what they sought for the hour; and neither they nor the others who danced beneath the brilliant lights of the great dance-hall saw the sadness of its necessity.

"I want to forget," the music kept telling Mollie as she swayed in Wally Welch's arms; but, "This is great," she told him.

"You do like me, don't you?" he questioned her, his narrow eyes flaming.

"I asked you to bring me, didn't I?" she countered.

"I thought you liked John Darrah."

"What made you think that?"

"Oh, I don't know. Say, Mollie, you and I could get a job dancing. There's a place on Thirty-fifth Street putting on a *revue*, and I know the fellow who's booking the talent."

"Nothing doing, Wally."

"Only a couple o' hours every night, and you'd make more than you could in two weeks at the Yards. Why won't you?"

"Don't want to."

The music ceased suddenly, and he led her off the floor. "All I need for a good dancing act is a partner," he urged. "You don't know the good money there's in it, baby. Did you ever see Ted Wilks? He gets two centuries a week for his act, and it aint as good as we could run. Think it over."

"No use," responded Mollie. "My folks wouldn't let me, even if I wanted to."

The stealthy gleam in his eyes brightened. "Aint you of age?" he demanded.

"Well, don't I live at home?"

"You could get married."

"Sure, I could, but what's that got to do with your act?"

"You could marry me."

"I could, but I won't."

"We get on fine." The band struck up once more, and he led her back. "Ever seen anyone can dance together better'n we can?" he persisted. "We'll win the prize."

"What prize?"

"There's a big one tonight. It's the May carnival."

"This is April."

(Continued on page 106)

M A D M a r r i a g e

Written and
Illustrated
by
George
Gibbs

AS YOU read this installment of Mr. Gibbs' painter novel, its author, himself a painter, is in Cornwall, England, laying color on canvas in the creation of pictures that will be shown next winter in the great Eastern exhibitions. "I am a winter novelist," Mr. Gibbs defines himself, "and a summer painter—the two professions linked by golf." As a result Mr. Gibbs has no hobbies, for each of the arts he practices provides him escape from the other, and escape is the sole purpose of the well-ridden hobby!

The Story So Far:

PETER RANDLE had found Josie Brant lost in the rain, staring down into the canal. She had almost no money, and—she was going to have a baby.

"What could I do?" Randle explained to his fellow-artist Wingate. "I took her in, of course. I couldn't let her die of pneumonia, could I?"

"A baby. H'm! Where's her husband?" asked Wingate.

"I don't know."

"Don't you realize that these people in Red Bridge will say that the baby is yours?" inquired Wingate.

"I hadn't thought of that," said Peter. "But it isn't. And if they're going to talk, I don't see how the devil I can stop 'em."

Later, Peter went with Wingate to New York; and there, at a studio party, he met "Tommy" Keith, a wealthy bachelor girl, who lived at the Ritz and whose friends were growing disturbed over her partiality for a certain notorious Jack Salazar. It was this Salazar, indeed, whom Randle had come to New York to interview, on behalf of Josie Brant.

Randle was persuaded by Wingate and his friend the dancer Lola Oliver that he should tell Miss Keith of Josie and Salazar; and calling at Tommy's Ritz apartment, Peter quite simply explained the situation; and when Salazar himself put in an appearance, Peter backed up his story with a photograph of Salazar inscribed to Josie. An ugly scene followed, but eventually Tommy dismissed Salazar and forgave Peter his intrusion.

Later Peter sought out Salazar, but his efforts to make the fellow marry Josie met only derision and suggestions that Peter was trying to make use of another man to cover his own derelictions. Peter promptly sought satisfaction with his fists, and got it most competently, but he went back to Red Bridge feeling that his mission had been a failure. And now Peter's friends, including Tommy, began a series of attempts to make him see Josie as they did—as a scheming creature with an unsavory past who was taking brazen advantage of his kindness. Peter, however, refused to believe the gossip or to see in Josie anything worse than misfortune.

Some weeks later Peter called upon Tommy Keith in New York and asked her advice in a business matter. He had intrusted his considerable inheritance to a lawyer cousin who had taken care of his investments and sent him a monthly income. Peter had just discovered that something was wrong with these investments. Tommy introduced Peter to John Kingsley, her business adviser—and the latter found that the trusted cousin and his partner had speculated with Peter's money and had lost most of it.

"I'm not afraid of getting along for myself," said Peter to Tommy when he reported the investigation to her. "But the loss of this money is going to make things difficult. . . . Josie and I were married in Philadelphia last week."

Peter spoke truly. The loss of his money made things very difficult, and Josie was bitter in her disappointment. Enough was salvaged from the wreck for immediate needs—and to give Josie the best of hospital care when it became necessary. Her baby died, however, and she was ill for some time.

Then at last Peter sold a picture, and the proceeds tided them over for a further period. He lost a second sale, however, by his refusal to alter the painting, a sunrise, to match the purchaser's curtains. Josie upbraided him heartlessly for this. Relations between them grew more and more strained. Finally she took an abrupt departure for New York. And though she presently returned, it was only for a difficult interlude before she left again, and Peter knew she had gone back to her old way of life.

Journeying to New York in search of her, Peter called upon Tommy Keith, and accidentally learned that she had been the purchaser of the first picture he had sold. And somehow this discovery brought about revelation—the revelation of Tommy Keith's love for Peter, of his hitherto unrealized feeling for her. But—Peter had sworn to love and cherish Josie; and the oath was sacred to him.

That night Peter found Josie—in the company of Jack Salazar. Forcibly he took her away with him in a taxicab and set out to drive with her to Red Bridge, but on the way she escaped, and he returned home alone. (*The story continues in detail.*)

PETER'S letter to Tommy, written from the sanctuary of the island, covered eighteen pages, and contained all that seemed necessary to establish his happy and unfortunate relationship to her in definite terms. Peter had never been much of a hand at writing letters, but what he wrote was satisfactory to Tommy, who thought it very beautiful. An idealist who has at last found his mission may be safely trusted to express himself in comprehensive terms to the object of his affection. Peter was no sentimentalist, and there was a kind of awkward gravity in his phrases that was very like Peter himself. He expressed a continuing wonder at the miracle that had happened to them both, but confirmed, to Tommy's satisfaction, his own share in the revelation.

He told her why he had returned to Red Bridge without attempting to see her, and of his fear that he needed time to adjust



She knew his self-control had been greater than hers, and she fell upon her knees. "Forgive me, Peter," she whispered.

himself to an emotion which might be disastrous to his peace of mind and hers. He wrote her that when he next came to New York he would be prepared to visit her in a spirit of resignation to her wishes and their unfortunate position. (Her wishes!) He told her of the finding of Josie and of her escape, blaming himself bitterly for his failure. "And yet," he said, "I don't just see what else I could do. It was like trying to cage a moth in chicken-wire. Her wings are singed already, and yet she still flies about the flame. God knows what the end is to be! I want to help her. But there's no way. Perhaps she'll need me some day. Then I'll have to help her, Tommy. I wouldn't be worthy of you if I didn't."

It was all of course very hopeless to Tommy, but since Peter's flight after their moment of communion she had had time, like Peter, to do a great deal of thinking. But unlike Peter, she was less amazed at the sudden declaration of her love than at the curious change that had come in her own viewpoint on Peter's

obligations to his wife and their own obligations to each other. With Peter's arms around her, some strange alchemy had been at work within her. She had seemed suddenly and mysteriously fused into his personality, permeated with his philosophy, touched to the core by the magic of his idealism. All things that mattered most to Peter seemed to matter most to her—self-respect, honor, duty and all the other attributes that Tommy's crowd had long since cast into the discard. She learned at that moment that there were finer things in the world than just having what you wanted when you wanted it. She wanted Peter Randle for her own. He was, curiously enough, everything that she was not, her other half, the completion of herself. She wanted him, too, because he needed her, and she had proved it. Peter was more than an interest that she had turned to when everything else had failed. He had been a rock that she had once clung to. He was her creature, and she loved him with the generosity of a tenderness that had been waiting to be called on—the tenderness

"And suppose," Tommy said slowly, "that I should decide not to pay you for this divorce?"

that comes to some women often, but to other women just once.

She didn't see exactly how she was going to get along without him. So she sat and wrote him a letter telling him so. It was a long letter, frequently underlined, and connoted a devotion no less fervent than his own. She told him, among other less important things, that she wanted him now more than she had ever wanted anything else in her *life*, that she wanted him to have on record by her own handwriting that she would wait for him *forever*. Nothing would make any difference; nothing would change her. She had seen specimens of all the men that were to be had in the world, and she wanted Peter to the exclusion of all others. As to Josie, she said little. Peter had done his duty. Josie Brant was, of course, impossible.

In concluding she wrote: "It is, of course, all very difficult for us, Peter dear. I'm glad you went back to Red Bridge instead of coming to the Ritz or even phoning, because I don't think I should have been strong enough then to keep my resolution and help you to keep yours. But I've had time to think now, and to understand just what we've both got to do. You're to go on painting fine pictures. I'm to go on—well, just trying to be a little more useful in the world if I can. When we meet again, I shall be very cool, very dignified and polite. Perhaps you shall hold my hand. I haven't decided. And you shall sit in the big chair with a lot of cushions and smoke your smelly pipe and tell me all about the things you've been doing. But we *must meet*, Peter. I can't get along without seeing you again. I *want* you to do your duty. I've got to help you to do that whatever it costs. It's already cost something. I never counted the cost of anything in my life. I know now that things one wants most can't sometimes be had at *any price*. But I'm trying to understand many other things—but mostly that our love, yours and mine, could never be the beautiful thing that it is if we let it be dishonorable.

"Oh, I shall be so strong when I see you, dear. You shall come to see me when you come to New York, and everything will be the way it was—almost, but not quite. But you will be strong too, and that will help me to be. And don't let it be too long. Because if you don't come *here* before a great while, I shall be going to *Red Bridge*, and of course that would be scandalous!"



After she had mailed the letter, she ordered her runabout and took a long drive into the country, alone, for this was the one diversion that could be suited to all of her moods. She had found a new taste for the beauties of the hills, the trees and the skies, trying to see them, as Peter saw them, translated into terms of color and light and air. They were Peter's skies. Somewhere over there he was painting them. He was working hard.

She wanted to help him. As she had said, she would have liked to buy all his pictures. But that wouldn't have helped Peter to be what he wanted to be. No amount of money that she could spend would make Peter paint better pictures. She had promised



even if some one else had painted it. And Wingate's increasing respect for Peter's talents was altogether reassuring. Other things being equal, then, there was no reason why Peter's pictures shouldn't sell as well as those of another man with an equal talent.

As she thought about the matter, it seemed reasonable to Tommy that it was quite possible for a man to become an artistic success as well as a financial one. There was Wingate himself, for example. But Wingate hadn't been a financial success until he was forty years of age. Why hadn't he been a financial success earlier in life? He had told her himself that some of his early canvases were better art than his later ones. But people hadn't bought them. He had not become the vogue until he had found a bellwether. "It takes a turn of fortune to make a man the vogue," Wingate had assured her. "Luck and a bellwether."

Tommy turned her car into a deserted country road and stopped the engine. The sudden silence seemed to put her more definitely in contact with her thoughts. She got out and paced slowly along a path among the grasses—a path that turned at an angle across a cow pasture toward a farmhouse and barn. The path was prophetic. It symbolized a plan that was growing in her mind—a shortcut that avoided the longer way by road and lane, a short way avoiding the longer journey that Wingate had had to travel, that other artists were traveling with the goal not yet in sight. The thought in its beautiful simplicity was amazing. "Luck and a bellwether." If picture-buyers were sheep, as Wingate had said, what they needed was a shepherd. If Peter's pictures were good enough to get into good exhibitions (and he had proved that), if two of them were so good that Lablache could sell them, there would be others so fine that other people would want to buy them. Tommy's logic seemed unsailable. It would be something more than amusing to play the game in Peter's behalf. He would never try to make himself popular. There was nothing to be expected in the way of propaganda or business initiative from Peter. And with no bellwether in sight, it remained for somebody to find one. She had made no promises to Peter about not helping him. The scheme was worth trying.

She went back to her car with rapid steps and went bowling joyfully homeward. A methodical campaign of persistent and tactful infiltration! She would cultivate only those who could be useful to her. She would become a gallery-hound, a patroness of the arts, a highbrow—even this she would do for Peter. Already she was planning at a great rate. Jimmy Blake—he knew everybody. She would meet all different kinds of artists and their patrons and give them tea. But all the while her eyes would be set on bigger game—directors of art institutions, curators of galleries, collectors who couldn't afford to be without a good Randle in their galleries. Each one of them should be the discoverer of Peter Randle, and each, by reason of that discovery, a bellwether. Were there flaws in her plan? She could see none. There were uses for her money of which she had never dreamed.

(Continued on page 110)

him not to buy any more of his pictures. But there must be other things that she could do to help him on his way.

Suddenly she recalled some of Fred Wingate's phrases about the career of the painter—Wingate, who had tasted most of the bitter ironies of his profession before he had become the vogue. There were a lot of good painters, better painters than Peter, who couldn't make their salt. There were paintings that people bought, and other paintings that they didn't buy. But if there were good paintings that people didn't buy, what was the reason? Tommy didn't know very much about Peter's profession, but she was sure that she would have liked "Afternoon Sunlight—Delaware River"

One Woman's Man

IT'S difficult to believe, yet true, that there are sections of the populous and popular State of Colorado where, so far as is known, no white man has ever set foot. The writer of this story, himself a High Country expert, is at present exploring several such regions, all to the end that more stories may be written for you. It is such authenticity that readers of this magazine have learned to count on.

A DUFFLE bag, its leather bindings scuffed by many a rough excursion, tumbled out of the car, followed by a bundle of fishing-rods, each in its aluminum case, a creel from which protruded river-grass that spoke professionally of the heavy catch within, and finally Drew Maynard, young, booted, brown, his checked flannel shirt open at the throat, and in his hat a few bass-flies. At the side door of the Maynard house, the butler appeared, bowed a greeting, then gingerly attacked the baggage, while the master, pulling at his belt and stretching his shoulders, surveyed the fishing basket.

"Got 'em this time, John," he said. "They were taking everything but the license-plate on the car."

"Yes sir?" It was an ancient story to the butler—fish from May until October, and from October until May the rewards of the hunt, to be brought boastfully home, then to disappear, via the back door, to whomever the servants cared to remember. The fruits of Drew Maynard's constant outings seldom reached his own table. Laurette Maynard, for instance, had her personal reasons for regarding as distasteful the efforts of her husband on the stream and in the field. As for Maynard himself, things seemed to have a different aspect after he was home again, and the taste of fowl or fish lost its savor. He naturally never mentioned the fact that there might be other reasons beyond the mere spoils of the chase which led him so often afield—in truth, he seldom thought of it that way himself, except at such moments as now.

"Mrs. Maynard at home?" he asked; and the butler, his arms full of luggage, bobbed an affirmative.

"Oh, yes sir. In her room, sir."

"Thanks," said Maynard dryly, and went within.

The big house was still. It was always thus, it seemed, when he came home—as though it had been closed and vacant ever since his departure. He strode into the living-room, glancing about with that air of appraisal which seems a part of any homeward return; it was precisely the same, just as he had known it would be: the humid fresh filled, his favorite outing magazines in their rack beside the big chair. Yet, paradoxically, it irritated him to have things always thus—perhaps because his wife had arranged the room. Yet it couldn't be that; for in spite of everything, Drew Maynard loved her. He turned from the big room, and rough boots clattering, proceeded upstairs.

"Hello," he said as he paused for a moment in the doorway.



"Hello, Drew." Laurette lay curled in the soft cushions of a *chaise longue*, a magazine in one hand, the other halting at the rim of a box of chocolates—a piquant, bored little creature with a picture prettiness, but lacking something, as Drew Maynard had so often told himself in the last few years. Now, with the same air of appraisal that he had given below, Maynard glanced about the room.

The place was disordered. Three books lay opened on a table, partly read, never to be finished. The box of chocolates bore evidences of investigative fingers having delved into the lower layers. Laurette tossed aside her magazine, hummed a bit of a popular song, then casually asked:

"Was the fishing good?"

"Great! Got several four-pounders, and hooked into one that I'm just as glad I lost. By the way, I've a bit of news—"

"I've a bit myself," she interrupted, then straightened from her languid position. "I've signed a contract with the *Gazette*."

"Laurette!" He stared, mouth agape. "Do you mean to say you've done that! Those silly songs too, I suppose. You're talking about the broadcasting?"

Laurette Maynard assumed to disregard his astonishment and smiled, but there was a flash in her brown eyes. She sang:

"All my girls have bobs and curls, and eyes of deepest blue,
All my girls are the dearest girls, for all my girls are you!"

The man's voice went lower: "Leave out the sarcasm. For some unexplainable reason, we do love each other."

By
**Courtney
Ryley
Cooper**

Illustrated by
**Raeburn
Van Buren**



"Silly or not, they're popular," she declared with a shrug. "Besides, it's perhaps no more foolish than your latest exploit—which I haven't heard about yet. What is it?"

Drew Maynard stepped from the doorway and his keen blue eyes suddenly narrowed.

"Don't squint your eyes that way, Drew," Laurette said. "It shows the places where you're not sunburned. On your lids. You look like a clown in the circus."

"How I look isn't the point. You're not going to work in that broadcasting station. It seems to me that a woman of your position—"

"The President of the United States broadcasts."

"Not idiotic songs. 'Papa, Love Mamma!'" he quoted with deep derision.

"Perhaps more people will listen to me. It's my own business what kind of songs I like. Anyway"—decisively—"I'm going to do it."

The man's voice went lower:

"I told you I had a piece of news for you. I meant it. I've thought over everything while I've been off by myself on this trip—"

"Thanks for the consideration."

"Leave out the sarcasm. I'm trying to do something for both of us. Maybe you'll deny it, but for some utterly unexplainable reason, we do love each other."

A twinge of pain passed over the youthful features of Laurette Maynard.

"That's the sad part, Drew," she said.

"But we can't make a go of it. I've thought it all over, and I've come to the opinion that it's the life you lead, here in the city."

"Oh?"

"This continual chasing around, distractions, leaping from pil-

lar to post, never knowing what you want from one minute to the next. Your silly friends—"

"Only silly because you can't speak their language," came in a heated parry. "What does anyone but yourself care about the pattern of a shotgun, or the name of a new brand of bass-flies?"

"As much as I do about their brand of guff," he retorted. "That's neither here nor there. I've thought it over. I'm going to take you away."

"Are you?"

"I've bought that place I was telling you about—in Colorado. Cheekas Lake. We're going out there."

BUT Laurette Maynard had risen. "We," she snapped, "are going to do nothing of the kind!"

"Laurette!"

"I said it, and I mean it. To go to a God-forsaken place like that—to live in a log cabin! I? To exist in that idiotic, useless sort of life, just so you can get your fill of catching and killing. I'm going to stay here."

"And sing brainless songs over the radio!"

"If I care to—which I do. The more brainless they are, the better. When I'm not thinking, I'm not remembering—"

"That you're my wife, I suppose."

"No." She became serious again. "That you're the sort of person you've become, Drew. Do you realize what you've asked me to do? To give up everything I possess, everything I enjoy?"

"It's for your own good!"

"For your own selfishness," she retorted. "Just because you don't like the way I amuse myself, you determine I must do an utterly unreasonable thing. Well, I won't do it."

"People never want the medicine they need," he insisted, and Laurette whirled.

"Medicine!" she sneered. "That's a new one. I suppose you're going to take me into the great open spaces where men are men, and women,"—she quoted a vaudeville saying,—*"are terrible. There you'll make a new person of me. As if you ever even notice the kind of country you go into! What kind of flowers,"* she asked suddenly, *"grow down on the White River where you've just been fishing?"*

"Flowers?"

"Yes, flowers. And you," she continued scornfully, "want to take me out somewhere and make me over. Just another of your foolish whims, Drew," she said, adopting a lighter tone. "You have as many of them as I. I suppose I'm to become an authority on trout—when they bite and when they don't bite. When to kill this and kill that and kill the other thing! That's all you think about—catching and killing. No thanks, I'll stay here and sing my silly songs for the *Gazette*."

He still stood there, glowering.

"Laurette! We've had about all of this sort of thing that either of us can stand. We've got to do something. You'll either go out there with me or—"

She paused in her humming.

"I—suppose so, Drew. But I'll not go with you. I can't."

At the door her husband hesitated.

"Just about what I figured, Laurette. We—we simply don't seem to be able to make it, do we? I've thought of that too. You'll—need an excuse. Desertion's about the easiest, I guess. It'll take a year. I might as well spend it out there as anywhere."

The lips of Laurette Maynard went gray.

"I suppose so," she said dully. "It—hurts terribly, Drew. But one big hurt is no worse than a lot of little ones. And we don't—don't seem to be able to find anything in common, do we?" Then, after a pause: "Maybe it's better, Drew. Maybe we don't love each other as much as we think we do. We might get over it. Then you'd marry the kind of woman who can please you, and I'd marry the kind of man who'd—"

"What?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "Oh, nothing. I just suppose every woman wants certain things."

"I've given you everything you wanted."

"Everything you could give me," she corrected, "that I would let you give me."

He sighed. "You're beyond understanding, Laurette!"

Her lips trembled. "As far as you're concerned, Drew," she said slowly. "I—I guess the best thing for us is—good-by."

A WEEK later, where the sun blazed, and the chipmunks scampered from rock to rock with the excited chattering incident to an invasion, a four-horse team clattered and struggled

with the grades of a road unused for years. A grizzled, booted mountaineer, his beard flying in the wind which swept down from the snow-splotted peaks immediately above and beyond, lurched in the seat, while the wagon rocked and jolted with the uncertainties of a road which had seen little of tires and steel-shod hoofs, but much of melting, of drift, seepage and the workings of erosion since it ceased as an active lane of endeavor with the death of a gold-camp far above. Great ruts, where in the spring torrents roared and lashed, broke the steady ascent; ancient, rotten stretches of corduroy caused the horses to cease their straining, and with snorts and pawings, to protest against the task before them, then, faithful creatures of the hills that they were, to press wearily onward.

Drew Maynard rocked with the load—a conglomerate of large tins, crammed with food, his rifles and shotguns and rods and fishing basket, an old trunk filled with bedding, and a few smaller cases. These latter he watched constantly as the creaking vehicle scraped along the rocky incline, or slued dangerously as the precarious trail dished precipitously toward the gulch, causing the driver to swing his scrambling team up the mountain-side, that they might hold safe their burden. He had spoken little during the journey, beginning with the gray of dawn at a lonely station, itself a good mile and a half above sea-level, from which the progress had been steadily upward for more than fourteen miles.

They were in the High Country now, that altitudinous segment of the Rockies seldom invaded by those who are not forced by circumstance, the lure of game or the beckoning of possible gold.

Long since, they had passed that phase of altitude where the aspen grew in its shivering stretches of green—now it lay below like a vague distant meadow, light against the heavier and blacker patches of coniferous growth; behind this, expanding in constantly lessening levels of altitude, the various lower ranges of the Rockies lay outlined, as upon a topographical map: the mine-scarred hills surrounding the little town where they had outfitted, the smoother rises of the primary range farther on, and at last, fifty miles away, the plains, swimming in a haze of distant heat. It all fascinated Drew Maynard. It was as though he had reached an elevation from which he could look over a wall at a country to which he must not return; as though, by his own volition, he had become a prisoner—a prisoner of height and desolation.

THE wagon-road led shelf-like about the shoulders of a series of mountains. Far across a cañon, through which a tumbling stream raced in frothy descent, the ghosts of an ancient forest fire stood white and bleak, unswayed by the wind, which carried—although it was midsummer back in the land whence he had come—a bite of autumn in its teeth. Here and there, in the higher reaches of aspen, a few touches of gold appeared, indicative of frost. The eternal drifts directly above the wagon-road bore streaks of clear white against the brown, where new snow had brushed the heavier patches, dust-caked by the winds of a fleeting summer. The trees, scattered beside the rocky scar which passed as a road, were beginning to take on a new shape. Their branches extended toward the lower country, trunks twisted, as though a playful giant had turned them round and round—then held them until resiliency had passed away. The squirrels which chattered and scolded here were different from those Drew had known in lower country—smaller, more active, with a belligerent air, as though resenting intrusion upon their time whose every minute must count against months of possible starvation.

Everywhere the man looked, the country seemed to be fighting—against height, against the incessant sweep of wind that shrieked down from the snowfields above—fighting!

Yet beside the trail the columbines nodded; the Indian paintbrush splotted its clusters of red against the blackness of seepage-softened soil, reinforced by the blooms of a hundred other forms of Alpine flora, which seemed to cram every moist space, stretching away in riotous confusion of pastel delicacy—pale blues and paler pinks, golds and faint silvers, lavenders shading into mauves—flowers, flowers. Drew Maynard, with a certain rebellion against Laurette's remark of a week before, turned to the driver.

"Well, I'll at least have plenty of blossoms for my table up here," he joked grimly.

The old man rolled his tobacco-cud and spat over a wheel.

"Folks don't pick flowers much up here," he said.

"Why not? They're pretty."

"Yap." Then silence for a moment, while the tobacco was again adjusted. "That's why they don't pick 'em. Figger the



"Beaten too," he muttered, swaying with fatigue. "You've got a right to live."

posies've got a hard enough time as 'tis. Don't git a real start till July. Be through in three weeks more."

"So? Stop blooming, eh?"

"Nope. 'Taint thet. They'd keep right on ef they could. Funny thet way, how things fight up here—like they'd just got a taste an' wanted more. Nope, 'taint thet. Winter."

"Winter? But it's only late August."

"Down in the low country," said the driver monotonously. "This here's timberline. Thet makes it different."

He swung his hand then, in an inclusive gesture which indicated the whole expanse adjacent to their destination, a scant half-mile upward, where the road disappeared at a ridge of a jutting, brooding hill, and the pines loomed black and clustered, as if

huddled in a final defense against a savage enemy. After that—only the deep red granite of jutting peaks, the ragged upstretches of rock tumbled upon rock, the dirty white of eternal snow-patches, their edges sharp against the barrenness of the stony lands about them.

"Well, I'm not up here for the country," Maynard said. "I came to fish and hunt."

"You'll get what you come after."

"Plenty of it, eh?" His voice had become vibrant with enthusiasm. "I've got some mighty good guns with me. Any deer?"

"Yap." The driver spat. "Git a buck most any time."

"Good! Smaller stuff too?"

"Yap. An' bigger, if you want it. Dependin' on jest what you want to kill. Kind o' wild up here. 'Taint reached much by the professional killers."

Thereafter conversation lagged, while the wagon scraped and rocked, while the ancient driver swore affectionately and cracked his whip when the wheels locked in the grudging trail. Higher, higher they climbed—until the tips of hundred-foot pines, long dead, merely fringed the road from their root-place in the gorge below; until, in the stretches that formed an abiding-place, the rotting timbers of age-old landslides piled helter-skelter like so much gigantic matchwood; until the living things took on an aspect more and more pleading as they bent toward the hazy, distant plains, as though begging to be freed from the earth which bound them. The driver spat again.

"Folks that make these hills often don't kill much, 'ceptin' fer food," he said. "Kind o' git so's they appreciate somethin' bein' around."

Drew Maynard laughed.

"I love to hunt," he said. Then as the driver and wagon lurched heavily, shifting the load: "We'd better straighten that box a little. It's fragile."

"Dishes?"

"No; radio. Just thought I'd bring one with me. Pretty far from telegraph or telephone up here—and I rather wanted to keep in touch, back in St. Louis. In case of accident or illness."

"Yap?" Then the driver shifted to a more comfortable position. "Don't know much about 'em. Folks don't have 'em much in this country. Lots o' Tommy-knockers."

"Tommy-what?"

"Knockers. Funny screeches an' sech, thet don't belong there. The sharps just call 'em interference, whatever thet is. Us hill-billies git funny notions, I guess. Ever'thin's so spooky. Tommy-knockers is what the miners call ghosts."

"Oh! You say the radio isn't much good up here?"

"Oh, it'll work all right, if thet's what you mean. It's a spooky thing, anyhow. I don't want no truck with it. Still, it's better'n tryin' to take somebody along fer comp'ny, up in this country. Yuh can allus shet it off. Humph! Pretty near there. The lake's jest around thet bend."

"Good. I'll get some fishing tonight."

"Yap. Ef you're thet anxious."

But when the supplies had been piled in the little one-room log cabin, and the creaking wagon with its bearded driver set off screeching on the down-grade, Drew Maynard did not turn at once to his rods and flies. He stood surveying his new abode, its squat, ancient stove, its one bed, its chromo pictures, souvenirs of a former occupant long since gone, who had tenanted this place as a haven during his search for gold. Out on the trail, the sound of wagon-wheels was growing steadily fainter. The wind moaned in the eaves of the cabin; a squirrel, in the twisted limbs of a pine, chattered. Drew Maynard moved as if by second nature toward a gun and fired through the window.

"Fresh meat for dinner," he said as he retrieved his tiny quarry. A half-hour later, as he rested a moment from the labors of unpacking, he stretched his arms above his head in satisfied laziness, and regarded the furry little thing which lay so still on the bench beside the stove.

"Nothing to do but fish and hunt," he mused.

He paused, listening. The wind had died for the moment. The stirring of the half-clothed pines had ceased, and the moaning in the eaves. Save for his own breathing, and the humming of

bluebottle flies outside the window, there was not a sound. Even the waves of the lake, stretching away from the rocky buttresses just below the cabin, had smoothed out. This great upheaved, gaunt world was still—still as death.

Drew Maynard stirred. "What's the difference?" he said, as if answering an inner chiding. "There'll be a dozen more of them chattering in that tree tomorrow. I'll have all the company I want."

But as he said it, he fished into the old trunk and brought forth a clock, unconsciously more anxious for the sound of its ticking than for the correctness of its time. He had deliberately come here alone, for two reasons: first because he detested companions when fishing or hunting, secondly because he had been warned, in the little town below, that if he were going into the high hills for any length of time, to make his trip solitary. A companion was only such for a time; after that, another human, they said, was likely to become strangely obnoxious. Moreover, Drew Maynard was in no mood for human company. Yet, as he set the blithely ticking clock on the top of a cupboard, he paused for a long moment in contemplation of the photograph of his wife which had been the first thing unpacked.





"Folks that make these hills often don't kill much," the driver said. "They appreciate some-thin' bein' around."

converted them, first to soft, velvety things, then to deep shadows, which, becoming blacker and more black, seemed to draw away, resentful, frowning. Drew Maynard cast again, tugged at the unseen strike, missed, then came tense.

"Yes!" he shouted. "Who's there?"

But it was only the muttering of a waterfall across the lake. The lake began to sparkle; strange iridescent points seemed to rise from deep within its black bosom. Drew Maynard stared, then glanced up. Only the stars—hanging low in an attempt at friendliness, yet cold, like the night wind from the snow-fields. Then from afar over the cliffs and pinnacles a shrieking rose: the coyotes, starting forth upon their nightly raids. Drew Maynard turned back to the cabin, halting at forms which rose suddenly before him, then became only trees—stopping to listen to voices which grumbled from a distance, came closer, then revealed themselves as only the wind in shuddering pines. He longed to remain, that he might catalogue all these strange things about him; yet he longed equally for the companionship of light and shelter, and the friendliness of the clock.

Once within the cabin, with the oil lamp gleaming and the stove ablaze, he laughed at it all, and with something of resignation went to the duty he had sworn for himself, the daily connection by air-lane with distant St. Louis.

Tonight the demons of the air screamed and shrieked and chattered at him as, the static of the high hills bounding into action with the pulling of the switch, Drew Maynard sought, out of all the world, for St. Louis. It seemed to take on a human quality, that screaming; now it was like the long-drawn-out whistling of old Mike, the popcorn man who made the rounds of the block, back home in St. Louis; again it was as (Continued on page 102)

"Silly child!" he muttered. "Silly child! I wonder what will happen to her—with the lead-rein gone?" He turned. "Guess I'd better be fixing that radio. Even if I do hate the thing!" Nor did he notice how easily he talked aloud. He merely turned to his task, completing it somewhat feverishly. Evening had come; the sun, bright yellow a moment before, had merely faded, then dropped behind the ragged fringe of the high peak at the far end of the lake, and now it was dusk.

Dusk, and the fish leaping. Drew Maynard soaked his leader, selected his flies and jointed his rods. Then, athrill with the excitement of the strike, the lunge of the hook caught fair, and the struggling rainbow lashing at the end of the line, he drew fish after fish into his net. The evening deepened without the man being aware of it. It took the ragged hills into its embrace and

"I want space in your paper for a letter that I've written expressing my opinion of such a dastardly offense."



A Father Who Dared

By William Dudley Pelley

Illustrated by Donald Teague

NO writer in America reflects the human drama of a little town with a deeper sense of reality than Mr. Pelley. For years, as a working newspaper man in such a town, in Vermont, he has watched the pageant of life from the office windows, and from time to time, as now, has set his skillful hand to revelation.

A MAN cannot publish a daily paper in an average small town through the social and commercial changes of nearly three decades without entering intimately into the personal affairs of its people.

No parents can greet a new infant, no family suffer commotions from obstreperous offspring, no father and mother realize relief from the expensive luxury of a modern daughter through final matrimony, no husband and wife "enjoy" a series of incompatibilities ending in alienation—without the reflections from these occurrences in some form or other reaching into the office of our paper up here in Paris, Vermont. Take the domestic troubles of Rannard Boltman and Bella his wife as a case in point.

Of course we might not have had the affairs of the Boltman family kept before us so aggravatingly had it not been for the Reverend Gustavus Gates. But to go back, the old files of the *Weekly Telegraph* will reveal Rannard Boltman's birth-notice; in the issue for November 20th, 1901, may be found the two-column

obituary of old Colonel Boltman, Rannard's father, ending with the assumption that the wheelbarrow factory out on "the flats" would doubtless fall to the management of his only son. And a year and six months later, all over the front page of the *Daily Telegraph* is an account of Rannard's wedding in the Second Presbyterian church to Bella Winship, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Clayton Winship, of Hastings Crossing.

A careful perusal of these items will disclose the personal interest of reporter and editor, originating from day-to-day contact with the persons themselves. And so when news filtered into our office that all was not going well with the Boltmans—that Rannard was encountering a somewhat ragged struggle with his inherited business, that Bella was showing herself as one of those wives who deport themselves constantly as though their feet pained them, that despite the two children born to the couple we might yet witness the eruption of a domestic volcano—we were increasingly concerned. But when the aforesaid dominie stamped into our

establishment one night during the panic of 1907 and made his catastrophic pronouncement, "*The wheelbarrow factory's bankrupt and Rannard Boltman's bolted!*" we would no more have made a sensational news story out of the episode than we would have headlined a local girl's lapse from rectitude or joked over the death of a prominent citizen.

"How do you know?" Sam Hod demanded.

"Bella came over to the parsonage and broke down completely. She showed me the scoundrel's letter and asked my advice about bringing him back. I want space in your paper for a letter that I've written, expressing my opinion of such a dastardly offense and asking that everyone watch for the scoundrel."

"Try and get it," my partner snapped tartly.

SAM HOD and the Reverend Gates began their residence in Paris at about the same time. Both were young, newly married, with much to learn of the world and life. Sam went into the office of the old *Weekly Telegraph*, succeeded to its ownership, took me in as partner, purchased a rival sheet, made the two a daily. From thirty years of barometric success he has emerged a kindly, tolerant, elderly man with shrewd eyes, grayed temples and complacent girth—likewise a disposition to wink an eye at the weaknesses and ills to which poor human flesh is heir, at the same time condoning nothing disloyal to the community or injurious to the good name or morals of the men and women in it.

The career of the Reverend Gates, however, has been one long battle to counteract the iniquity of mankind in general. To begin with, he was cut from the material out of which all the Cotton Mathers of the universe have been fashioned. He started life under the belief that this world is essentially vile, that humankind is the product of sin and that compassionate toleration for indiscretions or derelictions is but camouflage for approbation and license. His pastorate has been one long castigation of Bill Lowry's saloon,—when we had saloons,—Joe Cummings' pool-room, the French Club on Water Street, the prevailing fashions, the modern dances and the lack of stamina in the National Board of Motion Picture censorship.

And yet the man has survived: a tall, lean, hungry-looking individual of fifty, with angry hair, wide cheekbones, rimless spectacles halfway down a sharp nose, a preoccupied air and a great perplexity as to why an uncomfortable hush should settle over any male crowd in which he appeared, and an exodus to the sidewalk immediately ensue.

Yes, the Reverend Gates has constantly been "on the outs" with life, and he has never seemed so happy nor appeared to better advantage than when "replying" on a Sunday to the editorial position Sam may have taken on some local controversy. Not a bad man at heart, you understand; rather, he might be more aptly designated as a local martyr who has encountered an exceedingly hard time to mart.

So Bella Boltman turned to the Reverend Gates when her heckled young husband folded his tent, so to speak, and quietly stole away.

"What did he say in his letter?" asked Sam.

"Something about being sick and tired of Bella bossing him. That he was going after some real affection, children or no children."

"The provocation must have been pretty stiff to leave that little boy and girl behind, whether his wife gave him proper affection or not."

"What does such a scoundrel care for the heartaches of little children?"

Sam bridled at the way the man said it; one might have thought the grass widow his daughter, the way he exercised himself. "I don't know's I'd call Ranny a scoundrel," returned the editor. "I always thought him a pretty straight sort of chap. Talked well enough, anyhow."

"Well, actions speak louder than words. He's gone—and left Bella Boltman to raise those children, alone."

"Don't know's her plight's any worse than a hundred other women left widows every day in the year. And the provocation must have been there, I say, or Ranny never would 'a' done it. There's always a provocation, remember. There aint a single caper a person cuts, from cussin' a stovepipe to skippin' with another man's wife, that don't have its basis in due provocation. Trouble is, we condemn folks only because we see the results—never the causes that drove 'em to it. We judge 'em by our own backgrounds and temperaments, totally forgettin' that if we were set down in the same mess of circumstances, we'd probably do the very same thing. Or worse!"

"No causes could ever be adequate for a father to commit a crime like this."

"Crime? Dunno's I'd express it quite so strong. Every man's got his breakin'-point, and Ranny probably reached his. Heard Bella bawlin' him out for some little thing up to Whipples' one night, right there in front of company. She's the kind who dis-

She would discuss it with anyone, from the head selectman's wife to the grocery man.



"Barbara!" he repeated. "You are Barbara, I suppose, aren't you? I—I'm your father."

cusses her husband's little faults with the neighbors. Shouldn't wonder but what she's gettin' pretty much what she deserves."

"I see!" the Reverend Gates snapped dryly. "Then you *condone* this sort of thing—throwing helpless children—"

"I don't condone anything. I'm simply reservin' judgment because I haven't heard Rannard's side. Of course it falls pretty tough on the kids—if he's really gone for good. All the same, seems to me Bella's got to face her quota of responsibility. Speakin' of crimes, how about razzin' her man till he reached his breakin'-point and scooted to get shet of her? You mean to tell me she's wholly innocent?"

"If he'd been a real *man*, the fellow would have borne it. Suppose all men cut and ran every time a little domestic altercation came up? Where'd society land, then?"

"There's times when I wonder if it wouldn't be a darned sight better for the children than bein' raised by a spittin' and clawin' father and mother."

"The Bible says—"

"For wives to submit themselves unto their husbands as unto the Lord. Go preach that to Bella, and see how she takes it. What *you* upset for, anyhow?"

"Bella's been a communicant of my church ever since girlhood. It's only natural, having lost both father and mother, she should seek her pastor for solace and advice. And try as I would, I never was able to get Rannard to come and hear me preach—"

"That's a point in his favor," laughed Sam. "I see; your animosity's more or less personal. Well, forget it, Gus. These little complexes have a way of ironin' out—sometimes. I dare say these Boltman kids will grow and do passably well, father or no father. Boys and girls have an aggravatin' little habit of becomin' what the Lord intended 'em to become, whether parents enter into it or not. Did Rannard leave his wife any money?"

"Oh, he said in his letter he'd see she didn't suffer. But it isn't a man's money a wife—and mother—wants. It's his presence, his moral support, his masculine influence."

"No; what you really mean to say is: some one to do the dirty work. But strange to say, when a woman's got that presence and masculine support, it rarely occurs to her that it's her job to conserve it—not until after she's lost it."

"I get your attitude, Sam Hod. You secretly approve of what Rannard's done, simply because Bella may have her peculiarities, like all of us. Instead of using your paper as a great moral force to scorch such transgressors—"

"Gus, I'd like to know how long you think a paper would run and make any money, playin' the rôle of scold for the town? What's Bella goin' to do, anyhow?"

"What *can* she do? The man's *gone*. Nothing lies before her now but grim, inexorable duty."

"Wont hurt her any, grim duty. Might be the makin' of her. And the worry'll take off some of her fat. She's got too much, anyhow."

"Well, she's said that if she has to assume all the responsibility for raisin' that boy and girl, she'll teach them to hate their father—"

"And you condone that?"

"It's only natural she should feel so, isn't it?"

"Doesn't speak much for your teachin's, lettin' her pour that sort of vitriol on impressionable children."

"It would be mighty thin punishment for the father's action. It's in a man's children that he always meets his retribution."



"I wonder!" mused Sam. Then he added: "But that goes for a woman too—if you're right. However, don't let's lose any sleep over it, Gus. Rannard may get homesick and come tootin' back."

But Rannard Boltman did not come back. He might have suffered homesickness—in fact, we know his ensuing homesickness was hideous. But he did not come back—at least, for years. And during that time the Reverend Gates kept us faithfully informed regarding the woefulness of Bella Boltman's widowhood.

To begin with: for the first time in all her days Bella Boltman was introduced to responsibility—specific, aggravating, inescapable responsibility. The girl Barbara had been three years old, the son Harrison a year and seven months, when Rannard showed the town his heels. Parental Paris simply couldn't understand how a normal man could thus steel himself to all tugs of baby hands at his heartstrings, shut his eyes to consequences and set his face toward parts unknown as though he had never a care in the world.

Rannard was blistered in church meetings and at sewing-circles; Bella was solaced and coddled over back fences and across church-supper kitchen dishes. In so far as I was able to perceive, not a soul in the place outside of Sam Hod wasted the slightest thought



on the man's motivations or tried to comprehend what causes drove him to do as he had done. He was black, insufferable, outside the pale. Bella, on the other hand, was blameless, pitiable, wronged beyond compensation. And her responsibilities were grievous—at least, the town so inferred.

One might imagine she had been left with a whole orphan asylum, the fuss she made over her trials and worries. And the town mothers sighed over her, and the local wives used her as a glaring example of what their own hard lot might be if their own menfolk showed themselves calloused enough to hold up Rannard's conduct as a precedent. Bella did not spurn all this compassion. It was incense burned unto her.

She was a large woman physically. In her early married life she had been pleasingly plump, but as she aged, she fattened. The aggravations and cares of her "widowhood" should have left her frail, forlorn and piteous. Instead, she began to look like an inverted triangle, and most amazingly healthy. She had a round head set on a pair of tremendous shoulders, and the bob of her yellow hair (yes, she wore it bobbed) only accentuated the roundness of that head and the breadth of those shoulders. Most of her face became chin, and it dropped straight down to her

bosom. The bobbed hair curled toward her cheeks in points, and even in the mornings she wore jade earrings—some Paris people wondered if she slept in them. Hands and feet appeared ludicrously small to serve a woman of such ponderosity. She had scarcely any vamps to her pumps, and hopped like a rabbit.

The more responsibility weighed upon her, however, the heftier she became. When discussing the "burden" her husband had cast upon her,—and she would discuss it with anyone, from the head selectman's wife to the grocery man,—her mouth would draw down at the corners. And steadily, venomously, as the years rolled up and no word came back from the erring Rannard, into Barbara and little Harry she injected the malignity of her own spleen—spleen at her corpulency, spleen at her burden, spleen at the pinch of her pumps, spleen at finding herself a widow without a widow's privileges.

Time and again people wondered why she didn't divorce the truant on grounds of desertion. The Reverend Gates informed us in the office that Bella held divorce to be immoral; she was a God-fearing, Christian woman, and the Bible held specific declarations concerning divorce. As a matter of truth, we knew she was too indolent to get a divorce. Besides, if she divorced Rannard,

she would thereby forever sever herself from the chance to wreck him—in case, at some distant day, she got trace of him. Bella would no more have cast Rannard on the domestic ash-heap than she would have cast Barbara or Harry or the money that came to her with such mysterious regularity. Rannard was far from being zero in her life; he was the mainspring of the pity she demanded of the town, and by keeping her legal bonds strong and healthy, she might eventually tie him to the block of her wrath and bash him with the ax of her vengeance. All of which was constantly kept before the minds of her offspring.

"I WISH you wouldn't talk about Rannard Boltman," declared little black-eyed Barbara to three women one day, who had been discussing the absentee in the mother's kitchen absence. "He's a scoundrel—even the minister says so—and the less his name is mentioned, the better!" This in the twelfth year of the precocious child's age, and all adolescence ahead of her.

The three women raised their six eyebrows in astonishment—and then dropped them. But not one of them went home that night without a rankle deep within her. Strange to relate, that rankle was at Bella, not at her erring husband.

"But what's supportin' her?" demanded Sam of the Reverend Gates one afternoon in the office.

"Oh, she gets a check from a New York trust company four times a year," the minister admitted sourly. "All the same, that can't compensate for the loss of—"

"How much is the check?"

"A mere thousand dollars."

"A mere thousand dollars! You mean, every three months Bella Boltman gets a thousand dollars? Four thousand a year?"

The Reverend Gates admitted that this was so.

"Then what's she all the time caterwaulin' about?"

"The responsibility—"

"Apple-sauce! That woman doesn't need sympathy; she needs a couple of swift kicks—even if she is a female!"

"All right! Wait till one of those children falls into some social pit or other, through not having a father's influence and counsel to guide them as they're growing. He'll suffer his punishment—you wait and see. He's stealing the sweets of his freedom now perhaps, but the day will come when they'll taste like ashes on his tongue."

"Then those kids will also be disgracin' the mother who's 'sacrificed' herself so much to raise 'em. Don't forget that, Gus."

"But you can't blame a poor weak woman, burdened with anxieties beyond her strength—striving to do the best she knows how according to her light—"

"Baa!" scoffed Sam. "Bella's poor and weak enough to move a safe. If those kids turn out with queer complexes, it'll be solely and completely because of the venom the woman's injected into 'em to hate and despise their dad—"

"You don't consider he deserves it?"

"I'm thinkin' of the effect on the youngsters themselves."

"That should be—and will be—Rannard Boltman's cross." The minister pounded his fist on the exchange table.

"Gus," grunted the editor, "you may be a holy man in this community, but to me who's known you personally the past thirty years, you're an ass!"

"Thanks," returned the pastor. "From you that's a compliment." And he stamped out, scowling. One gathered he would never set foot in our office again. But he always came back. Sam Hod and his antagonisms were as vital to the Reverend Gustavus Gates as his dyspepsia.

And then, one early spring evening, coming up to Paris in the shuttle train from White River Junction, diagonally across the aisle from me—I saw Rannard Boltman!

A MAN of forty-five or thereabouts, you would have taken him to be, had you been with me in that odorous smoking-car. He was tall, well-knit, distinguished. The front of his well-shaped head was bald, put a powdery fluff of silver at each bronzed temple made him vaguely handsome. And yet—there were lines in his face which should not have been there.

You'd have felt him to be a man who had paid a heavy price for whatever he had become; he had hoed a hard row, and the hoe-handle had persistently whipped back in his face. Just below Hastings Crossing he turned and glanced backward—a bit furtively, I thought, though it might have been nervousness. He saw and recognized me!

He hesitated only a moment, then rose and came back to my seat. "Hello, Bill!" he greeted. "How's everybody up in the old home town?"

"Rannard," I answered, and meant it, "you're a sight for sore eyes! You darned old prodigal, how came you on this train?" And I made room for him beside me. He did not accept the place, however. He pushed the opposite seat-back forward and rode up to Paris facing me.

"I got sick of living abroad," he began. "I thought—"

"Abroad? You mean Europe?"

"No—the Orient. Japan! The quake smashed up everything out there last year. Took it into my head I'd come home."

Home! I wondered what sort of homecoming it would prove to be. I said, however: "Must be fifteen or eighteen years you've been away. Gosh, how time flies! Yet aside from losing some of your hair, and the rest getting gray, I knew you at once."

He lifted those troubled eyes. "I went away in nineteen-seven." Suddenly I detected pain behind his voice. "Tell me," he begged, "will I be *persona non grata* up here in Vermont?"

"Well, a town's mind is a child's mind," I told him. "Other domestic commotions and sensations make it forget pretty easy—at least draw the sting from personal rancor—"

"Sensations! Did I really hand Paris a sensation when—"

"If you didn't, Mrs. Boltman's contrived to keep her 'widowhood' more or less sensational ever since you bestowed it on her. What brings you back anyhow—your daughter's marriage?"

Had I struck him with a hammer, I could not have stunned him more. His mouth came open; his falling cigar made a sprinkle of sparks at our feet. "Daughter's marriage?" he whispered faintly.

"Yes, Barbara's getting married—didn't you know?"

"To whom?"

"Lynn Gates—son of the Reverend Gates. The two families have been pretty thick since you left. It's quite a local romance, some think, though others have their doubts."

"But Barbara's not yet—good Lord, have I been away so long? Why's she marrying so young?"

I shrugged my shoulders. "Have to ask her," I said. "The young folks go their own ways, these days."

The prodigal father pulled a second cigar from his vest without taking his eyes from my face. He bit off its tip and got it lighted—to give himself composure, I suppose. "Apparently," he remarked, his voice under better control, "I'm getting home at an opportune time."

"Mrs. Boltman know you're coming?"

"No; I just took it into my head all of a sudden to return to America and make the trip up here to look over the changes. A father might get curious, you know, to see how his children have grown. And now you tell me Barbara's getting married! Great Caesar! I can't get it through my head I've got a daughter old enough to be married."

"Wait till you see her," I responded significantly.

He leaned forward, pitifully eager. "And my boy, Harry? How's Harry?"

"Fraid you wont see him. Harry's reporting on a paper down in Boston. Worked awhile in our office but got this better job only last month. Grew up into a regular, two-fisted feller and the despair of every girl in the place."

WE reached Paris at twenty minutes to seven. The street-lamps were lighted. No one recognized my companion as we walked down to the business section from the depot. We walked mostly in silence, for—speaking personally—I was too preoccupied with Rann Boltman's story, as he had told it in the past half-hour, to join him in whimsical comment on the changes time had wrought.

"Where do they live?" he asked as we neared the hotel.

"The Asheley house, up on Elm Street."

"But when I left town the Asheley residence was considered a rather pretentious—"

"So it is yet. Your wife hasn't been exactly poverty-stricken during your absence, Rannard."

"I know no reason why she should have been. I wasn't as yellow as that!"

"Going up at once?"

"After dinner. I'll check my bags first, and get a room."

"At the Whitney House? I thought you were going home?"

"Not till I know how Bella and the children—great Caesar, Barbie married! I'll be sort of scared to see her grown so big."

It gave me a heart-pinch, the way he said it.

"Well, eighteen years is eighteen years. She'd naturally grow, you know!"

"What sort of chap is this minister's son—anything like his dad used to be?"

(Continued on page 140)

"All the girls make
fun of me. . . .
But I tell 'em
I'm just a little
plain home body."

T. D. S.

"Mr. Silverthorne Please!"

By McCready
Huston

Illustrated by T. D. Skidmore

McCready Huston is another of those young men to whom this magazine may justly point with pride. For in large measure he has come into his own in these pages, where so many of his stories have appeared. It was but a step for him from short stories of the New Trianon Hotel in Jonesville to a novel of his own country—Indiana; now the step has been successfully negotiated and the book's publication is imminent. He's going to stick to Jonesville and the New Trianon, however, and in an early issue will be another tale of the two.

WHEN the Mastodon Hotels Corporation took over the old Smith House in Jonesville, rebuilt it and rechristened it the New Trianon, it acquired, with the good will and reputation of the Smith House, a fixture in the person of Clavering Silverthorne.

The president of the Mastodon chain was smart enough to know that a clerk who had been greeting the transient and local guests in Jonesville for fifteen years might be a useful person to have around while the New Trianon was training the old customers to take their coffee after, instead of with, their meals.

While the hotel was the Smith House,—three dollars a day, American plan,—coffee was largely something to dip bread into; but both coffee and bread were excellent, and one could get a dinner for what the New Trianon intended to charge for one sad *filet mignon* without the shoestring potatoes. To take away the seventy-five-cent dinner that had made the Smith House famous was not expedient without somebody on hand to soften the blow; and so Mr. Silverthorne, the night-clerk, was invited by the new management to stay and become the chief desk man. The invitation was issued in spite of the corporation's employment efficiency expert, who had consulted his card index and had recommended transferring a bright young man from the company's Hotel Midlandia in Brownsburg.

Mr. Silverthorne fitted the place like a saxophone player's Tuxedo. Hotel clerks, like morning-newspaper men, should have no relatives, and he had none.

Not only was he without encumbrances, but he was wary of acquiring any. Mr. Silverthorne was jealous of his independent state. When he said good-morning to Clarice, who presided over the lobby humid and news-stand, he employed a studied, disinterested tone suitable to a bachelor of forty-five when addressing a widow of twenty-seven.

Clavering Silverthorne was going somewhere, and he did not intend to carry extra weight. His motto was: "He travels the fastest who travels alone." He had adopted it as his favorite motion-picture subtitle, plucked hot from a film of God's country, where men are men. Mr. Silverthorne was a collector of subtitles. He did not propose that his life should be without color or meaning. He had a goal and it was within sight.

SOME day he would walk into the lobby of the most luxurious hotel in a great city, hand an English kit-bag and his trunk-checks to a boy, take the pen from a cringing clerk, sign the register, demand an outside room with bath, above the twelfth floor—and get it. His was a hunger for the grandeur of gilt and onyx, marble and velours, wrought iron and gleaming brass, white linen and silver, a hunger growing out of his lean years spent watching country hotel lobbies revolve from behind desks. He was a veteran of other and lesser Jonesvilles.

His passion for being a guest had grown until he had come to measure his slowly rising balance at the Jonesville Title and Trust by the number of days it would command at the Ritz or the Ambassador, the Blackstone or the Drake. He was willing to eat limitless fried eggs at fifteen cents in the Greek restaurant in the basement of the New Paradise Theater if some day he could eat them at eighty cents a pair in Madison Avenue, New York. He admitted to himself that even his intention of writing a novel was secondary to his ambition to move with the powerful and great through the dazzling magnificence and courtly vistas of the Hotel Carlovigian.

Mr. Silverthorne intended to live.

Now, a man moving toward his goal usually is happy, or at least content, no matter how slow his progress; but Mr. Silverthorne was not happy. As he turned the verd-antique bay of the New Trianon's desk over to Mr. Fellowes, he was conscious of a return of a strange restlessness, an irritation, that had been disturbing the calm of his normal being for days. Taking from its hooks the brass plate that bore the legend, "Mr. Silverthorne," he laid it carefully away, letting his eyes rove the gay rotunda. His gaze rested on Dewey P. Smalley, who, as Armand le Brun, swayed listlessly every evening as violinist of the New Trianon orchestra. Armand, too, was unhappy. Clavering knew that; but the musician's discontent arose from the mere demands of the public for jazz when he wanted to play concertos. It had no root in the existence of another person, as Mr. Silverthorne's had.

Mr. Silverthorne's elevation had one distinct disadvantage. It was glorious, of course, to be able to look coldly over the heads of Jonesville's leading Kiwanians; but it was chilling to admit that his new job interfered with his career. It gave him his evenings free. After years as a night-clerk, to be forced to find some way of spending evenings was to him almost a calamity.

He had soon discovered that long, unoccupied evenings meant an outlay for amusement that would wreck his financial program. Instead of watching his day of glory come nearer, he was horrified to realize that it might slip away from him; and to make matters worse, Clarice, across the lobby, instead of working nights as she had done for five years, had become the daylight custodian of the cigars and cigarettes and was ready to check out at seven o'clock and stroll with him down the Boulevard Belleau or along Pershing Avenue. . . .

He saw she was counting up her cash register. In five minutes, dressed for the street, she would emerge from the locker-rooms at the employees' entrance. Mr. Silverthorne knew that if he took his hat and went at once, he would be safe, but his going would seem pointed; if he waited for her, that would seem pointed too, and in a different, more significant way.

Although the Mastodon Corporation, with the assistance of five hundred thousand dollars from preferred stock, floated in Jonesville by the Bigger and Better Jonesville Committee, had made the New Trianon a hotel beyond the criticism of even so sensitive a creature as Mr. Silverthorne, the new situation it had created for him was beginning to be annoying. As a night-clerk, without entanglements or engagements, he had moved steadily toward his goal; but now—

He decided to carry off the situation with that air of distinguished detachment he admired so much in Milton Sills; so he waited in the gloom of the employees' entrance and stepped to

the walk beside Clarice with his version of the tolerant dignity he had so often observed in Sills' pictures at the New Paradise Theater.

Clarice looked up at him with a twinkle. "I was afraid you weren't coming," she said. "I'm going to get a little supper at the flat; better come along out."

He did not know how Milton Sills would meet that. Clavering was hungry; and he knew the dexterity of Clarice in her kitchenette. He had been there once; and the memory of it took away the fortitude with which, after his day's work was ended, he always moved, without pause, toward the New Hermes Restaurant in the basement of the New Paradise Theater.

"I ought to go on out to my room," he countered. "I've got a lot of writing to do tonight."

"My land! So have I!" Clarice laughed. "I've owed Mamma a letter for three weeks. Folks up in Benton Harbor'll think I'm dead."

"This isn't a letter," he said stiffly, realizing that they had turned west on Pershing Avenue and were walking steadily toward the New Sussex, where Clarice kept house with her six-year-old son.

"I know; I've heard about your writing," she murmured. She seemed to be walking quite near—too near—to him. "Lena, one of the girls in the Coffee Shoppe, told me; she says you're a genius or an author or something; only it's a secret, and I wasn't supposed to let on. I can't imagine where she heard it."

Clavering could. He knew where Lena had heard it. He had told her himself one night in that secondhand Ford coupé he had struggled to possess for a few weeks in the spring.

"I can't say I'm an author," he said. "I just jot things down that come to me, just for my own amusement."

"You're wonderful," Clarice said softly. She was standing under the entrance lamp of the New Sussex, looking up at him out of the little close-fitting black hat that had been made with just such an occasion in mind. The result was perfect. The next thing Mr. Silverthorne knew, they were in the flat, and Clarice was starting to scramble eggs on the electric grill.

"All the girls make fun of me for not going out more," she riddled, laying the plates and filling the coffee machine. "But I tell 'em I'm just a little plain home body, and I'd rather be here in my own little nest than dancing at a ball given for me by the Prince of Wales. Give me a good book and a nice, cozy, rainy evening, and I don't ask anything else."

Mr. Silverthorne wondered just what she meant by that.

"Of course," she went on, "it's rather expensive, keeping up a three-room apartment, and all the girls wonder why I don't get somebody to come and live with me. But I say I want my little Harold to have the privacy of a real home. He's in there now, asleep."

She gestured with her fork toward the bedroom door.

Clavering arranged the chairs, the while he thought of a room at the Ritz.

FROM where he sat at the little gift-shop table, he caught too-frequent glimpses of himself in the mirror behind Clarice. It reminded him that he was bald, and the reflection of his cheeks told him he was fatter than his ideal of Lew Cody permitted. Lena, in the Coffee Shoppe, had once told him he reminded her of Lew Cody. He looked around critically. He resented the comfort of the little flat, the good coffee, the scrambled eggs and bacon. They were lures, clearly set forth as such; and so was Clarice, smiling at him brightly from behind the percolator. It was one of those situations into which he had so often seen strong men walk, on the screen, and out of which they never emerged the same.

"My land!" she began again. "I don't see how you keep everything going in a big house like the New Trianon. It must take a lot of brains. I don't see how you get any time for your writing."

"Oh, you get used to it. But a man has to keep up. I'm going East soon to look over some of the big hotels."

It had never occurred to him before, but tonight, sitting there with the third cup of Clarice's coffee, it seemed probable that he would go at once on a tour of hotel inspection for the Mastodon management.

"Will you be gone long?" she asked, and he went right on:

"Oh, possibly a month."

He lighted a Jonesville Chamber of Commerce cigar. This imaginary business trip might pave the way for the time when he would have to blight this little girl's hopes. He wanted to be merciful. He enlarged the theme grandly, squinting at the ceiling through his smoke.

"I love to see a man smoke," murmured Clarice.

"I'd like to run up into the White Mountains for another month," he went on. "I ought to work on some of the things I've been neglecting; and I'd like to get my hands on a fly-rod again."

He had not caught a fish since his boyhood on the banks of the White River, where he had hooked mud-cats with a bent pin.

"You'd like to work on your—writing, up there?"

He did not affirm or deny. He looked away, frowning, as he had seen Jack Holt do.

"I must go. I don't want to; but I have a lot to do tonight," he finished.

In the little hall she seemed disappointed. Indeed, when he caught sight of the bright square of living-room, he was on the point of staying. But a man must be a man. His motto came to him: "He travels the fastest—" So he traveled; and behind him the door closed lonesomely.

SUCCESSIVE days of saying good-morning to Clarice with the right degree of detachment, and of saying good-night with the air of not knowing he should walk with her to the New Sussex, wore Mr. Silverthorne fine. Robbed of his poise by daily reminders of domestic life that he knew was reaching out to tame him, he struggled to master his fate; but eating more suppers in the little flat, he realized, with every bite, that safety lay only in going away. An especially delightful fresh peach short-cake decided him.

"Mr. Lee wants me to go East," he said, putting down his fork. "I loathe travel, but the management depends on me, so."

That was his beginning, and presently he wrenched open the door and was gone, down three non-fireproof flights to the open air and masculine freedom. He stood under the street-lamps, gazing at the stars, with the gentle breeze stirring the dozen loyal hairs on his scalp, and for a long minute he was Conway Tearle. Then he tramped home to his furnished room, filled with a high resolve. He would take the road of ambition, lead where it might.

He intended next morning to seat himself casually on the edge of Mr. Lee's desk in the private offices and demand a leave of absence. He had planned to swing one foot and smile down at his chief, as he had seen Tom Moore do. But the chief's glance of irritation stood Mr. Silverthorne up against the glass partition and caused him to revise his request. He said he would like to go away for a while, and if it was all right, he would draw on next year's vacation.

"A week at the outside," snapped Mr. Lee, and turned back to his work. Mr. Silverthorne padded out. Behind the desk again, he switched the register around with an angry sneer and glowered at the head bell-man standing inoffensively at his station. He would go, and he would never come back. They would expect him next week; and after they had waited four or five days he would send them a telegram, saying he had consented to manage the Carolingian in New York, or that he had gone to the White



The bell-man led the way to 1675, in which a guest was tolerated for ten dollars a day.

Mountains to finish his book. He would leave Jonesville and the New Trianon flat.

Arrangements made, he visited the bank, where he wrecked his work of years on the four-per-cent side of the white-tiled vista. From there he went quickly to the station, and in a voice he did not recognize, asked the agent to reserve a lower on the Limited for the next afternoon. His former grandeur was rushing back into his repressed and harassed being, and so he deliberately chose the most expensive passage he knew.

Fifteen minutes later in the Olde Suffolk Leather Shoppe—when *you* lived in Jonesville it was Martin's harness-store—he was pointing out to the clerk the bag he had carried mentally for two years. He bought a pair of them, ordering his initials in discreet black letters, after the knowing style he had admired when the luggage of Cyril Maude's company was stacked one day on the floor of the New Trianon's lobby.

A clothing store, recently renamed the Cambridge Shoppe, was next door, and there he spent an hour selecting two suits. Mr. Silverthorne asked for and insisted upon having "rough tweeds." Those, he knew, were what all gentlemen wore. The salesman was rather mystified at first, but exhibiting the roughest and heaviest of his numbers, one a reddish, double-breasted affair and the other a gray with a surface like a cocoa mat, he closed the sale as quickly as he could, promising that the trousers, when



Mr. Silverthorne's face was pale. He repeated unbelievably: "You don't page?"

altered that afternoon, would be as long and as wide as his customer described. A shaggy cap and some shirts with soft collars followed. A pair of stout shoes completed the purchases. Mr. Silverthorne started to call them boots, but he knew the salesman would not understand.

As he hurried home, he was tingling with the knowledge that he had carried off the first lap of his adventure like a man of the world. His masterful decision had earned his full self-approval, and he tossed his straying hairbrush into its proper place with a heartless sweep of his arm. Standing in front of his mirror, he repeated *Twenty Exercises for Busy Men* and recited all he could remember of "The Shooting of Dan McGrew."

Mr. Silverthorne had only one regret: He had priced new evening clothes, but they were too much for his native caution. He had decided that his 1903 dinner coat, with padded shoulders and long waist, would have to do. Among as many as would surround him in New York, at the Carlovigian, his coat would not be noticed.

As night drew on, he sat under the gaslight and composed a note to Clarice, letting her know he had been sent East on business and might be gone indefinitely. He signed it below an "*Au revoir*," he thought that meant what he intended it to mean.

BEHIND his red-cap, Mr. Silverthorne walked majestically up the incline into the gateway of the city of his dreams. Emerging mistily into the enormity that he discovered was the Grand Central, he wished to halt and take his bearings; but before he knew what was happening, a taxi starter had shut him emphatically into a cab and he was careening along Park Avenue, puzzled and amazed and a little sore. He had discovered that man proposes but the god of traffic disposes.

It disposed to spoil his dramatic entrance to the Carlovigian, too. The taxi-driver turned where turning was prohibited, dodged where dodging was deadly, and with a wrench of the wheel that sent his anxious fare crashing against the window, drew up at the edge of the canopy before Mr. Silverthorne realized they had even started.

The field marshal who was acting as doorman snatched him from the cab, and a bell-man snatched his grips. When Mr. Silverthorne began to breathe again, he was standing in a long line, waiting to see if the Carlovigian would consent to endure his

presence for the night. He looked around sadly and regretfully, thinking of how he had planned to saunter casually and impressively into the attentive, deferential center of things. He had not sauntered. He had been catapulted. And no one seemed to know that he had arrived.

He was fifteen minutes reaching the superior young man with the sleek hair who appeared slightly puzzled and uncertain about the outlook. If Mr. Silverthorne told him he wanted an outside room with bath above the twelfth floor, he did not pay any attention. He consulted some invisible statistics behind a screen, stopping occasionally to examine his nails, and reappearing, made a memorandum on a printed slip. This he handed to the bell-man, who had dived over the line of prospective guests to stand at Mr. Silverthorne's left, and turned to the next suppliant.

Baffled and confused, Silverthorne was pressed into a brass cage and shot aloft to the sixteenth floor, where the bell-man obtained a key from a haughty young woman at a desk in the corridor, and then led the way through many tunnels to Room 1675, in which a guest was tolerated for ten dollars a day.

In a twinkling the young man in the uniform had moved the window shade three inches, raised the sash, peeped into the bath, pocketed his quarter and disappeared, leaving Mr. Silverthorne to the diversion of contemplating the rooftops of the famous Forties.

He was at the peak of his adventure, and he had found no thrill. He stared at his English bags, standing side by side. They had caused no comment. Among the scores of bags rushed into the Carlovigian hourly, they had attracted no more attention than their owner; and that was none.

It was only a little past eleven. How quickly he had been shot into place by the station, cab and hotel combination! The daylight-saving custom was all that saved him from having a morning to put in with nothing to do. Fortunately, luncheon time was near. He would put on his other suit and go down and have himself paged. His greatest hour was at hand.

Bathed, shaved and arrayed in what he thought were rough tweeds, he delivered his key to the haughty young lady at the floor desk and received in exchange a printed slip telling him his own name, his address and specifying the amount of his daily tribute to the hotel. It read, "*Clavering Silverthorne, Chicago*." After all, Jonesville is not so very far from Chicago.

Descending in the brass cage, he was projected into the whirlpool of the street floor, a whirlpool of people who seemed to be going somewhere in a desperate hurry, then suddenly changing their minds and hurrying back.

He edged into a refuge behind a pink marble pillar and tried to rediscover himself. From where he stood, he could see the entrances of numerous rooms full of dining-tables, entrances guarded by distinguished-looking men in dinner coats who seemed to be worried about something. Niches for the sale of flowers, cigars, newspapers, theater-tickets, toys, candies, perfumes, baffled his gaze. Compartments for managers, assistant managers and assistants to the assistants ranged one side, and in them were mahogany desks but no managers. There was a counter for baggage and steamship information, and a small riot over in one corner proved to be people trying to telephone. And always boys laden with baggage staggered in from the entrances, and men pushed their way toward the room-clerks. It was hot. Feeling nervously at his collar-band, Mr. Silverthorne wondered why Englishmen were so devoted to rough tweeds. He felt swathed in coffee-sacking.

After a few moments the million movements before his tiring eyes seemed to take on a kind of furious order. He began to believe his evaporated confidence and joy of living might return. He put out a hand and touched a passing bell-man.

"I want to have a party paged," he said.

The bell-man was clearly annoyed.

"We don't page anybody here," he said. "If your party is a guest, you can leave a message or call up his room. It's against the rules to call anyone. Ring his room over there." He finished with a gesture.

Mr. Silverthorne's face was pale. He repeated unbelievably:

"You don't page?"

"No—couldn't. Got too many people in the house. Cut it out five years ago."

He turned away, leaving Mr. Silverthorne standing bewildered against the pillar.

He couldn't even hire himself paged! He was denied the exaltation of hearing "Mr. Silverthorne, please!" ringing through the vaulted lobby of the Carlovigian. He moved miserably into the whirlpool and let himself be bumped around by a hundred men who perhaps had some reason for being. For the first time he was conscious of the pancakes he had eaten while the Limited was whizzing past Poughkeepsie.

Presently he approached the grilled entrance of the Corinthian Room and there was whisked inside by the ambassador on guard and seated in the center of a lake of small tables around which men and women were lunching feverishly.

Without knowing what he ate, except that it was bad for his digestion, he consumed the Carlovigian Special Plate at one-fifty. That finished, he wandered out and was lifted skyward to lie on his bed and wonder what it was all about.

But Clavering Silverthorne had planned his plunge too long to admit defeat now, and as he lay resting, feeling sleep stealing to his rescue, he set the stage for the evening.

He would dine, as he had always intended to dine, in state; and afterward he would stroll up Broadway and drop into a theater. He was sorry he had no cane; he would like to "twirl a light Malacca" as he strolled. Where had he read that the hero twirled a light Malacca?

Tomorrow he would take up with the management of the Ritz or the Ambassador or perhaps the Carlovigian the matter of giving one of them the benefit of his services. Dramatizing his approach, he decided to buy a cigar and chew it with a frown in the style of Theodore Roberts. He drowsed, hardly noticing the twinges from the Corinthian Room's Special Plate at one-fifty.

Mr. Silverthorne had always thought the *carte du jour* in the Olympian Room of the Hotel New Trianon back in Jonesville a formidable thing to read and the prices on it disturbing; but when the embossed placard of the Byzantine Gardens of the Carlovigian was placed deferentially on the heavy, thick cloth before him, he realized he hadn't seen a thing. It almost blinded him. Before he had fully grasped that the document was a bill-of-fare, four waiters had done fifteen unnecessary things to the table, glass, silver and napery. As he regarded the printed lines dimly, through a blur of bewilderment, he was conscious of a waiter standing at his shoulder with pencil poised.

"The guinea hen is ver' nice this evening," the personage murmured in Mr. Silverthorne's ear. "Or perhaps a little of the blue-fish and the capon Louis XV—alligator-pear salad—a sweet?"

This was a little too smooth and rapid for Mr. Silverthorne. He had not only seen things done with cere-



An hour later the doctor stood ready to go. He was a young man and seemed to be trying to keep from laughing.

mony in the New Trianon, but he had also watched Richard Barthelmess at restaurant dinners in many pictures. He knew a dinner should begin with soup, or if not that, then with fruit in silver cups, bedded in ice.

"I'll have some soup," he said.

The waiter made an illegible scratch on his pad. The speed of the gesture gave the guest no time for studying the million strange names of food that leaped at him from the display.

"The lobster are ver' nice this evening, sir. We serve them ver' nice here. A small lobster with mayonnaise, some julienne potatoes, perhaps hearts of lettuce, anchovy sauce?"

That was it. Clavering knew now what he wanted. In such places people ate lobster. He would have that. He said so and started to lay the card aside, but the waiter was not through.

"The new peas are ver' nice this evening—or perhaps the green beans? And a sweet? Some of the baked Alaska? Some cheese? Coffee?"

The sweating guest was at ease now. He tapped the card on the cloth as he had seen Lionel Barrymore do.

"Artichoke," he said. "Bring some artichoke and some Brie cheese afterward." As he handed the card to the waiter he added: "If the Brie is fresh."

The waiter vanished. Providence had been good to him. Mr. Silverthorne had not vetoed the new peas or the green beans and had left the sweet to him.

Seated majestically before his bright red expanse of lobster and his dull green splash of artichoke, Mr. Silverthorne acknowledged tremblingly to himself that he did not know how to eat either. There was so much of both—with the peas, beans, lettuce and the bread-tray, they covered the whole table. The only clue he had to the situation was a miniature fork. This would not serve as a lance for the artichoke, so it must have something to do with the lobster.

His first tentative thrusts suggested caution. It was bad enough to have the lobster on the table but it would be worse to send it skidding to the floor.

He probed the artichoke, smearing the yellow sauce about earnestly. He wanted to appear busy, as if he brought to lobster and artichoke a special technique. Poking around among the leaves, which had been plucked and piled about, he discovered by accident what appeared to be edible. He nibbled at that, temporarily ignoring the cactus. Back at the lobster he began to find that the armor was not all of the sprawling thing. Little by little, perspiring in his 1903 dinner coat, he got some of the unfamiliar food into his being.

The common viands he consumed savagely between his explorations of the others; and when the waiter finally swooped down with his cohorts of bus-boys to clear away the dishes, Mr. Silverthorne had made memorable havoc. The waiter whisked on the cheese with indestructible disks supposed to be crackers, and Mr. Silverthorne crunched them valiantly.

A strange and cloying pudding followed, and a tall, silver urn of scalding coffee. He dispatched the threatening-looking dessert quickly and sat with his coffee and a cigar he had bought from the part-time countess in the lobby. It was very black and very thick, the thickest and blackest cigar he had ever seen.

Paying his bill and leaving a little more than ten per cent on the tray, he groped for the exit to the lobby with just a suggestion of a reel. Somehow the idea of strolling up Broadway, twirling a light Malacca, did not appeal to him just then. He did not feel like dropping into a show, but more like dropping into bed.

Mr. Silverthorne made for his room.

Some hours later he woke dismally, the

host of a terrific pain. Outside the Venetian blind, which he had managed to lower and then could not raise, the city was black, and the only sounds were those clangors and mournful street-cries of middle New York just before the dawn.

For a man who did not know how to eat lobster, he had consumed a great deal—a great deal too much. The lobster, the salad, the artichoke, the cheese, the mysterious pudding and the prodigious quantities of ice-water had brought him face to face with the tragedy that had impended for years. Mr. Silverthorne was a sick man.

He was a lonely, wretched, frightened sick man—a sick man who one moment feared he would die and the next moment feared he wouldn't. On the sixteenth floor of the Carlovigian, in solitary grandeur, Mr. Silverthorne realized, as he groveled and groaned, that he was, after all, forty-five years old. When the demons of indigestion marshaled their shock battalions and threw

"UNTIL CLOSING"

The soul-shaking romance of Armand le Brun (*né* Smalley), who was first violinist of the New Trianon Hotel orchestra in Jonesville, will be narrated in an early issue—

By McCready Huston

their full offensive against the racked stanchions of his feeble frame, he reached out of bed for the telephone. When the sleepy operator responded, he pleaded with her mournfully:

"Send the house physician to Room 1675. Send him right away."

He managed to creep to the door and unbolt it. The trip back to the bed was a horror of chills.

AN hour later, the doctor, bag in hand, stood ready to go. He was a young man, not as solemn as the Jonesville physicians, and he seemed to be trying to keep from laughing.

"You'll be all right in two or three days. I'll look in on you toward evening and again in the morning. Better not get up today."

Mr. Silverthorne rolled over and turned his face toward the lavender roses that sprayed the wall. He had no intention of getting up. He was skeptical about ever getting up.

"Tell me again what you had to eat yesterday," said the doctor gently.

The man on the bed started to tell him, but before he had finished, the doctor opened the door.

"You poor nut!" Clavering heard somebody say. He twisted his throbbing head to see if it could have been the doctor. It sounded like him. Anyhow, he was gone, and Mr. Silverthorne was left alone with his symptoms.

A poor nut! Well, that was what he was. He admitted it to himself. He had paid hundreds of dollars just to hear his own name shouted and had failed in the attempt. All that had been delivered by the city of his dreams was a case of acute indigestion. All he had to show were two bags he would never need, and two suits he would never dare wear in Jonesville. Jonesville! Not so bad. He lay and thought about it as daylight stole sheepishly into the room.

As an after-flash of pain twisted his pudgy bulk toward the wall, he began to resent the doctor's attitude just a little. The doctor had been so businesslike, so unim-

pressed, unless it had been with Clavering's painfully recounted audit of his diet of the last twenty-four hours. The doctor must have noticed those English kit-bags on the stool; did they mean nothing?

He lay and waited for another pain, and as he waited, his mind went back to Clarice. He phrased a message to her. He would ask her to come and rescue him. That would be a treat for her; it would make her happy. As he wadded the pillow and steeled himself for the next stab, he could see Clarice coming into the room. He would be sitting up by that time, in a wheel-chair, gazing pensively out over the East River. His room commanded an excellent view of the prison on Blackwell's Island. He would gaze pensively. He wondered what "pensively" meant; he would look it up sometime.

He wondered why that pain did not come back; demons of its class did not just disappear. He recalled what the doctor had said: "A touch of ptomaine." That sounded important. He had heard of people having that; usually famous actresses forced to cancel engagements suddenly, or prize-fighters on the eve of desperate encounters. He relaxed comfortably; ordinary persons never had ptomaine. Perhaps the doctor had noticed those English bags, after all.

Could it be that the attack was over, actually over? He dozed for a while, surprised that he could; and he remembered to throw his arm back carelessly across the pillow like Monte Blue. Anyhow, there was something interesting about illness; he would have a pallor. . . . His eyes closed.

As he dozed, he pictured the doctor reporting his case to the management:

"That Mr. Silverthorne, up on the sixteenth—Englishman, isn't he? I wouldn't disturb him for a few days. The poor fellow had a narrow squeak; a touch of ptomaine—"

Mr. Silverthorne's drawn lips relaxed into something like a smile.

Sometime later he started up. He had overslept again and would be late at the New Trianon—late for the fourth time this month. Then he remembered, and sank back into the bed, realizing that his dozing had been sleep and had lasted three hours. He turned himself tentatively, musing anxiously on possible twinges; but none came. He rested again, comfortably; and resting, he recalled his impulse to telegraph Clarice. He recast the message in his mind, glad he had not sent the first version.

Finally, Mr. Silverthorne had it right. He sat up in bed and lifted the telephone from its stand with a contemptuous sneer, jiggling the hook impatiently with a gesture he admired so much in Wallace Beery. When the message operator responded to his imperious demand, he frowned grandly into the mouthpiece and dictated:

"Mrs. Clarice Smith—Hotel New Trianon, Jonesville:

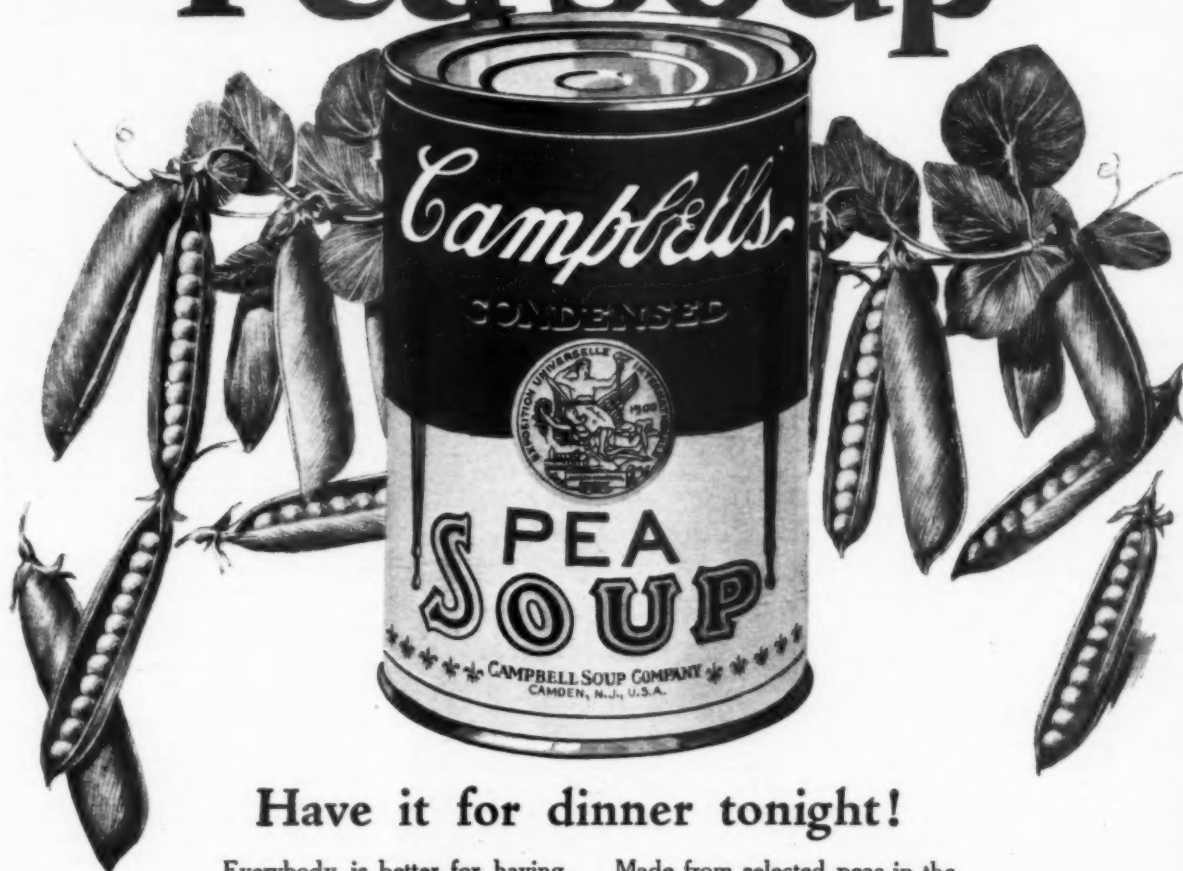
"Finishing with Ritz, Commodore, Ambassador and Carlovigian this week. May run down to shore to write my report. Expect me Jonesville Sunday. May drop in for supper. Not much to learn here.

"Clavering."

While the operator was reading his message back to him, Mr. Silverthorne reclined against the pillows. His mind was not on the words coming crisply over the wire. He was dramatizing his entrance into Clarice's little dining-room in the New Sussex. When it finally dawned on him that the operator was trying to get his attention, he resumed his frown, and in a voice he had borrowed from Otis Skinner, rebuked the minion at the other end:

"All right, my good fellow. And charge it to Room 1675. Charge it to Mr. Silverthorne, please."

Everybody should eat Pea Soup



Have it for dinner tonight!

Everybody is better for having plenty of wholesome and nourishing vegetable foods in the regular diet.

Good pea soup—Campbell's—is rich in this valuable vegetable nutriment so beneficial to the whole family, from the children up.

And it is so delicious, so refreshing in flavor, so appealing to the appetite!

Made from selected peas in the greatest soup kitchens in the world. Rich country butter. Blending and seasoning by Campbell's French chefs. Just taste this pea soup!

Thousands of housewives always prepare their Cream of Pea with Campbell's, according to the simple directions on the label! As delightful as it is convenient.



21 kinds
12 cents a can

This Campbell's scout will put to rout
All girls in competition.
In games or books or handsome looks
She wins on good nutrition!

Campbell's SOUPS

LUNCHEON

DINNER

SUPPER

ONE WOMAN'S MAN

(Continued from page 89)

if a woodpecker were drilling holes in the loud-speaker; then it was swallowed by conglomerate roarings. Suddenly forgetful, Drew Maynard leaned closer. Across the air came a voice, recognizable in spite of the interference—

Sweet little Mamma,
Sweet little pet,
Sweetest little plum that I've ever seen
yet—

Maynard rose and snapped off the connection.

"She's all right," he muttered, and taking up his fishing basket, he selected a trout for his evening meal. At the stove he noticed the furry thing he had killed in the afternoon; opening the door, he threw it away.

"Too much trouble to fix it," he said. "I'll get some birds tomorrow."

SLEEP—and morning—blazing, radiant morning. Drew Maynard cooked his breakfast, and with his shotgun over his shoulder took the down-trail. His gun barked often that day; his hunting coat galled his shoulders, as with the fading sun, he turned upward toward his cabin. And there, on the hook beside the door, hung his fishing basket.

"Forgot them," he declared to the Other Person who seemed to have been beside him all day. "Ought not to have done that. No sense in just letting them hang there."

But it came, as rather an unpleasant shock, that there was little else to do with them. There was no one to whom he might give them, and the realization left him for the moment perplexed. This was the first time he had caught or killed without a shadow of an excuse. His mind strove frantically to supply one. That night he worked long on a large pine box, with a screen door, and fitted with nails. Fish and game, he had heard, would keep indefinitely in this country, if hung in a cold, shady place, away from flies and the invasions of pack-rats. A long winter was coming. Tomorrow he must make another catch. And this he did, halting in his work that night only long enough to tune in on St. Louis, to hear an announcement, then return to his labors. Nothing to do but hunt and fish, nothing to do. . . .

The aspens deepened in their gold coloring. Fogs began to roll upward in the late afternoon, sweeping through the gaunt timber like the onslaught of smoke from a forest fire, higher, higher, then to coagulate about the cold, high cliffs, and suddenly becoming clouds, go drifting away. The nights grew more frigid and penetrating; the chipmunks which once had scampered before him at his every excursion now were becoming more infrequent. There came a day when hours of wandering brought the sight of none.

"Holing in," said Drew Maynard. "Getting ready to fight it out. Funny how they all know."

The next evening when, early dinner over, he worked at the task of cleaning up, Drew Maynard took a few scraps over to a tree about fifty feet from the house, and scattered them there, particularly some nuts he had decided would do as much good somewhere else as waiting until the time when he should care to eat them. Another squirrel had taken its abode there, working feverishly against the winter.

A week after that, the biggest trout of them all lunged at Maynard's fly, caught fair, then swirled into its fight for life. The fisherman shouted with unrestrained joy as his automatic reel gave forth line and retrieved it at the pressure of his finger, as his rod looped and strained, straightened dangerously with the rushes of the finny

captive, then was restored as rapidly to a position of tautness as Maynard overcame the slack and, wrist aching, muscles alert, fought for the capture of his prize, his every nerve atingle with excitement, his body and brain strained upon but one thing—success.

"Roll there!" he shouted, as if with drunken ecstasy. "Let's see you roll, old fellow!" But the five-pounder held straight in the water—straight except when he curved with the sudden sweep of the rush away, or leaped high above the surface of the lake and, head shaking savagely, sought to dislodge the hook. Five minutes went by—and ten more after that. Drew Maynard's arm began to hurt to the elbow—pain hardly noticed. His voice went higher: "You're the best fighter of them all—tight line there, old fellow—keep a tight line. Watch him now—he's dogging it—look out—look out! Straight for the bottom that time—and then right out of the water! Up to every trick in the trade. Here, you—stop coming in on me that way—stop it, I say!"

Then the big trout rolled, drunkenly, loggily. His fight was over. The last atom of energy expended, mouth agape, he came slowly in toward the net, to do little more than quiver as the mesh touched him. Drew Maynard leaned forward, dislodged the hook and then, with a sudden impulsive movement, turned the net inside out, and stood there staring at the great trout, too surprised at its freedom even to exert itself, merely held its place in the water. Maynard poked at him.

"It's all right," he said. "I'm surprised myself, if that's what's wrong with you. But go on. Anything that can put up a fight like that—"

The lake, the next day, presented a surface alive with trout. Frost was heavy in the air, deadening the wings of insects, slowing their escape. But Drew Maynard did not fish.

"A fellow can't eat up the whole lake," he told the lonely little cabin and the ticking clock. "I'll go hunting tomorrow."

BUT when tomorrow came, he raised his gun—then set it in the corner. Even the excuse of food did not appeal as it once had. Instead he worked on the aerial and a new ground for the radio. The Tommy-knockers—especially one he had named Casey, after a circus chimpanzee he had once known, Casey, with his incessant "Wa-hoo, wa-hoo!"—had been a bit too active of late. Yet he would not part with them; somehow they made things easier when the wind howled and the coyotes screeched across the ridge—easier indeed than the haunting of that voice from St. Louis:

I want a lovin' man,
A lo-o-ovin' man,
Who will do all the lovin' that a lovin'
lover can—

It was at such times as this that Drew Maynard shut off the machine, went to the door and looked outward—out at a chill thing growing colder, the snowfields up there gleaming maliciously under the stars, watching the country about him as if for evidences of a fearsome enemy. There were fringes of ice upon the lake in the morning; day by day he had found himself halting beside a big rock, where, under its protection, a single flower lingered. The rest were gone, the columbine, the Indian paint-brush, the hundred varieties which he knew only by noticing them. Of all only this lingered, this little flower with its blue blossom, and the three buds which day by day fought toward blooming, ere the snows should come and the drifts pack tight its tomb. At last Drew Maynard carried forth a tin can and

reached for his hunting knife. He cut the soil carefully, almost tenderly. Then he bore the little thing within, to moisture and warmth and sunlight without frost. And it bloomed. And he sat in the afternoon and smoked his pipe and looked at it, while the snow whirled without—for winter had come, suddenly, viciously, paramount.

"You deserve it," he said once—without realizing it. "You made a good fight."

AFTER that, day followed upon day, week upon week, with only the snow, and the bleak hills, and the shrieking wind. With only that flower there by the window, its blooms gone, but its leaves still green, gratefully green, it seemed. That flower, and the Tommy-knockers and St. Louis calling forth its mockery, and the coyotes at night. Perhaps a track in the snow o' mornings. But that was all.

All until the radio batteries faded in strength, and he brought forth his snowshoes, purchased months before, that with his burden upon a sled he had made, he might travel downward to the stage route, thence to town, for recharging. But when the job was finished, he turned upward again—although the lights, the company of humans, the thought of companionship, called to him, tugged at him. Nor did he know why he forsook it. Nor even why he halted, at the log-pile just below timberline, to gaze at the aloof, frigid majesty of a mammoth drift, where fifty feet beneath lay the huddled stalks of last year's vegetation, waiting—waiting.

"Poor little devils!" he said. "They fight for what they get."

Then the cabin. And old Casey, yelping his "Wa-hoo—wa-hoo!" through the loud-speaker. Old Mike selling his popcorn by means of his whistle. And the woodpecker still working on that telegraph pole. Then through it, something else:

"That's pretty," said Drew Maynard. "Funny—sounds like her voice. Couldn't be, though—never sings that kind of songs."

The next night a new storm came—bringing others which continued for a month, for it was January now, January with its blizzards, with its sweep of snow piling higher and higher against the little log cabin, snow which shrouded every living thing in white, until even the pleading, extended limbs of the trees no longer might reach toward that which they strove so hard to reach, but sagged painfully downward, as though disheartened, beaten. The only tracks in the snow now were the tracks of tiny things too light to sink. The lake was no more—only a brighter field in a world of blinding whiteness. Nothing was left—except the Tommy-knockers. Then St. Louis came back again, but faint, disjointed. He heard only her name, then a rattling and banging. But at least, that was something. She was well.

A month more—of lonely snowshoe wanderings, of trailings after this track and that, of watching beneath trees for the tiny things which had made their print upon the snow, to come back again. But as often as he remembered it, Drew Maynard forgot his gun. There was game in plenty in the home-made refrigerator. Drew Maynard was looking for something else—for life!

Life, because these things of the hills had strangely humanized themselves, like friends departed. Because the wind spoke only of desolation. Because even the coyotes had ceased to screech over the hill. Because the things which once had meant only sport to him, were gone—buried, just when they had begun to be something more than an object of shot or hook.

And he was not lonely. Why, he did not



Among Philadelphia Debutantes—

This soap is 7 times as popular as any other for the care of the skin

NEW YORK'S lovely debutantes, inimitable for chic, daring, vivacity—

Boston's debutantes, girls with the dazzling freshness and grace of flowers—

Washington's, Baltimore's debutantes—charming descendants of an aristocracy famous for beautiful women—

Philadelphia debutantes, with their old-world beauty and breeding—

How do all these young society girls take care of their skin? What soap do they use to keep their skin soft, smooth, flawless?

An overwhelming majority prefer this one soap

It was to learn the answer to these questions that we conducted an investigation among the debutantes of five leading cities.

We discovered these facts—

Among New York's one hundred and sixty debutantes of the season, Woodbury's Facial Soap is more than three times as popular as any other; among Boston debutantes, nearly five times as popular; by the debutantes of Washington and Baltimore, preferred six times over to any other soap; and among Philadelphia debutantes, seven times as popular as any other.

"I use it because of its pleasant and softening effect on the skin."

"It imparts a smooth glow to the skin, and relieves an oily condition."

"Mother insists it is the best toilet soap; it makes my skin feel nice and smooth."

"It improves my skin (i. e. blackheads and large pores)."

These are characteristic comments made by the Philadelphia debutantes, in telling why they use Woodbury's Facial Soap.

A skin specialist worked out the formula by which Woodbury's is made. This formula not only calls for absolutely pure ingredients. It also demands greater refinement in the manufacturing process than is commercially possible with ordinary toilet soap.

Around each cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap is wrapped a booklet containing special cleansing treatments for overcoming common skin defects. Get a cake of Woodbury's today, at any drug store or toilet goods counter! A 25-cent cake lasts a month or six weeks



HOW TO CORRECT AN OILY SKIN

FIRST cleanse your skin by washing in your usual way with Woodbury's Facial Soap and luke-warm water. Wipe off the surplus moisture, but leave the skin slightly damp. Now work up a heavy lather of Woodbury's in your hands.

Apply it to your face and rub it into the pores thoroughly, always with an upward and outward motion. Rinse with warm water, then with cold. If possible, rub your face for thirty seconds with a piece of ice.

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Name..... Street.....
City..... State.....

know, but he was not lonely. He was merely waiting for departed friends to return—week after week, month after month, a silent man, except when he talked to his companions of the unseen, mumbling to himself as he turned the dials of the air-set, leaned back, heard the announcement of a singer—and rarely listened to more. Those silly songs would be more hateful than ever now.

SPRING came in the land below. But at Cheekas Lake it was only a date on the calendar. A month more, and two weeks after that—in which three times he had heard a voice above the squallings of Casey and the whistle of old Mike's popcorn wagon, faint and distant—and beautiful. A voice he could not, would not believe, drifting in for only an instant, then gone again. Gone—while he found himself wanting something he could not catalogue.

Then spring came even to Cheekas Lake. A bird sang, amidst dripping branches. A chipmunk chattered. The first air-bubble appeared in the ice-coated surface of the lake. That day Drew Maynard—simply for something to do, he told himself—began an illogical task. He laid the foundations for the building of a fireplace.

"Always chilly in the evenings," he said. But he did not explain why that rule had not held good in the months that were gone. He merely labored, with a strange joy—standing off to survey with fond appraisal his every mite of progress, forgetting even his daily stint at the radio in the enthusiasm of his task: higher, until the fire-box was made; upward, until the chimney protruded through the roof, made tight again by rough chinkings—until the logs blazed on the hearth and he could sit before the talking flames. Then as suddenly he rose and went to the radio. Only an announcement—her singing was done for the night. And the name of a song which did not sound popular—though he had not gotten it in its entirety. Drew Maynard moved to the door. It was bedtime; lately he had regained his habit of studying the skies, for the hope of sunshine tomorrow, and living things.

A swirl of white caught him as he faced the night, sticky white, greeting him angrily, fiercely. And as fiercely he faced it—a beast which should not have returned, a hateful, unwanted guest, sweeping down upon tiny things which had struggled with hardiness and faith!

He turned savagely, for coat and cap and a blanket ripped hastily from his bed. Out there near the big rock was a little fringe of green, nurtured by human hands, that was to have brought forth the first blossoms of the summer. And this had come, to chill them, to bind them deep again! Unmindful of the screechings of the radio, he strode to the door and swung it wide—then stepped without, nor noticed that the sweep of wind had extinguished the light behind him.

"They've got a right to live!" he muttered in reply to the blast of the storm. "They've fought for it!"

He stumbled on, head down, collar tight against his throat. The storm was gaining in intensity; the swirl of snow enfolded him as it was enfolded the mountains, converting

a black world into a vast expanse of unrelieved white. For a moment the big rock showed before him; he raced toward it, bent over and, with smaller stones holding the blanket, covered his cherished bits of green. Then again he rose, and once more bent, once more struggling against the fury of the tempest, began his return.

A hundred feet onward, he halted. He should have reached the cabin before this. Surely—he went on another twenty steps. But there was nothing but gray before him, gray and blinding flashes when the masses of white struck his eyeballs. A frantic feeling went over the man; he swung about and strove to retrace his steps—only to find that the distance brought him no nearer to a realization of his bearings. Then for a long time he merely stood and waited—until the storm should lessen and the cabin reveal itself.

But there was no lessening, no lifting of the white. Only that railing shriek of the wind, and the steadily driven masses of snow, piling upon his shoulders and in the wrinkles of his coat-sleeves as he stood inert. Drew Maynard moved to activity again—to struggle forward, to flounder in groping fashion—then, crazed with the insensate fear of the hills, to go on and on, a man forced by nature to activity while a tormented brain told and retold that it could avail him nothing.

The slippery ice of the lake, and he took hope—that he might reach its edge and by following it about, achieve his ends. But it only led him to the frozen inlet, thence to the thickness of the pines, where they struggled in their last stand at timberline. Beaten, he stood and shouted, merely that he might hear the sound of his own voice. But even that was muffled, dead—the land of snow was a land of dullness.

Hours—and he had become a stumbling object, striving merely to maintain activity in order to keep life warm within him—falling repeatedly in the snow, then rising that he might force himself onward again.

DAWN—and with it only driving white—and the rocks of timberline. Drew Maynard, grim, his clothing frozen, fought new strength into aching muscles, and went on.

Noon. . . . A white thing which rose and fell, rose and fell—then halted. Something was moving before him, something which made a dragging track in the snow. Moving—at last to halt.

"Beaten too," he muttered. A small brown form lay in the snow, a trap dragging on one leg. Merely a woodchuck, perhaps from far below, finished in a fight which had led upward through fair weather, only at last—to meet this. A lurching man, swaying with the drunkenness of fatigue, bent slowly forward.

"You've got a right to live," he mumbled. But the thing in the snow only gasped. Aching fingers tightened in the loose fur of the neck. "If I had wood for a fire—"

But only the branches of sap-green trees, only the knowledge that his pockets were matchless. He moved slowly on.

Dusk and a lifting of the pall of white. Dusk and a drunken thing swaying along with a dead beast grasped in one tight-clenched hand. Dusk and a man mumbling:

"I'll use its fur—it's better than letting it rot there."

Then he said again, what in a groping way he had said a dozen times that afternoon:

"Something about those paws—about those paws. Why should I carry a thing just because of its paws? It's got me—this country. Why should I carry a thing because of its paws?"

A cabin, half buried in snow. The man gave no shout when he saw it, no speeding of his pace. Dragging step by dragging step, he accomplished the journey, to halt at the eaves, hang a lifeless thing there by the chain which had meant its death, then to stumble within.

Darkness had come now. On the table the bulbs of the open radio set glowed feebly; from the horn came the weird "Wa-hoo" of Casey and the whistling of old Mike in a combined riot of welcome. Drew Maynard only shook his snow-wet head, then unmindful of clothes or dampness, tumbled upon the bed. It was a half-hour before he stirred. And then—

Casey and old Mike were gone, with the clearing of the storm. A voice was making an announcement, from St. Louis—of a woman's name. And then—

"What's she singing that for?" Drew Maynard had straightened. There was only the answer of the voice, sweet, fraught with something more than the mere expression of a song—

. . . . in the tree-top,
When the wind blows,
The cradle will rock—

The man staggered forward.

"What's she singing that for?" he asked again. "Probably—probably because I said once that I hated it!"

But the voice itself was denial sufficient. A voice of softness, of plaintiveness, a voice which seemed to tell Drew Maynard that it could not lie. And he listened, arms half extended from his sides, mouth agape:

And down will come baby,
Cradle and all.

It faded—to give way to Casey and old Mike again, while the man went forward, and with thick fingers strove to bring it back once more. But it was gone. A hand went slowly across an aching forehead, as if to brush aside things which whirled and dazed him. He shambled to the door—moving dully, like a person in a dream. The stars gleamed now. He turned to look up at them. And something brushed against his forehead, something cold but soft—wonderfully soft. The paw of a dead thing. But to the man it had become suddenly alive with meaning, with explanation.

"That's why," he muttered, "—why I kept looking at it. Like a baby's hand! Like a baby's hand—"

He halted, listening. Casey and Mike were gone again. And in their place came a fading repetition of an ether-borne refrain:

When the bough breaks,
The cradle will fall—

Drew Maynard moved within. He stood before the fireplace. But it was no longer a thing of rough stones and rougher mortar. . . . A different fireplace, in a big living-room that she had arranged. And before it, toys scattered on the rug—the things he had always missed without knowing it. And a woman, the prettiness of her face no longer lacking, a woman radiant with a radiance as beautiful as the plaintiveness of that voice, looking up into eyes that no longer held her beyond understanding.

The sun shone the next morning in the High Country, melting the snow from about stubby bits of green fighting valiantly for life. In the pines the birds again twittered and moved about with the activities of nest-building. The chipmunks chattered and scampered; in an open spot a ground-hog piped curiously, then led forth its brood to observe the miracles of spring. In the big drifts that hid the ancient road were the fresh prints of the snowshoes of a man who sang as he strode along on the down-trail.

"Stop Thief!"

They called in Duff, that marvelous detective, when it looked as if some one were stealing from the Heflin Fund. And Duff—knew what to do. You'll like the story, which will appear in an early issue, for it's by—

HARVEY O'HIGGINS

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QUEEN O' THE MAY

(Continued from page 79)

"Tomorrow aint. Say, I'll bet you'll be the May Queen. Say, with that advertising, we could—"

"Cut it, Wally."

"You're crazy about John Darrah," he flared.

"I'm not. I don't care if I never see him again."

"Then I'll wait," he exulted.

"You're wasting time."

They circled the floor till the music again came to sudden pause. A man in white rose in the band balcony, lifting his hand for silence. "The final number," he announced, "is the May Queen contest. The couple winning the first prize wins one hundred dollars in gold, and the lady will be crowned Queen. Then we'll have the May-pole dance. The next dance! Choose your partners!" He stepped down, and through the throng on the floor ran a current of eagerness. Girls crowded nearer the rail in the renewed hope of choice. Men scurried here and there. There was a flurry of rearranging hair and skirts. Vanity-boxes flashed out of bags. Neckties were twirled into order. The band struck up. "Here's where we win," said Wally.

Some quality in his confidence pierced through Mollie's lethargy. Why shouldn't they win? No one on the floor had danced as they could dance, not even the girl in green who struck out now with the eye of the crowd on her and her partner. They'd win, and show Parmenter Street what they could do! John Darrah could go to Duran's if he pleased with Edna O'Malley. A girl didn't have to mope at home because he'd fooled her. "I'll show him," beat on her brain with the music. "Come on, Wally," she said.

Lifted by the urge of ambition, they moved as if on wings. Mollie had the sensation of floating over the smooth floor, buoyed by the beat of the drums, the wail of the saxophones, the spirit of Wally's determination. Other couples swayed past them, made eager by the lure of victory, but she knew that she and Wally were professional to their amateurish attempts. "At a girl!" Wally encouraged her. "Say, we can—" The music ceased on a high note. "We got it," he triumphed.

"You can't tell."

"I know."

The man in white singled them out, with two other couples. The band struck up again. The six of them danced, with the crowd applauding. "It's ours," Wally said as he caught the gaze of the man in white. "You're Queen," he told her as the man lifted his finger to beckon them.

FOR a moment, overwhelmed by the excitement of success, she thrilled to joy. Then the thought of facing the crowd as an individual appalled her. "Can't I sneak out?" she begged Wally.

"Well, I should say not!" he told her, and led her toward the judge. In a blur of excitement she found herself drawn into a group of attendants. She heard a woman tell her that she danced like Irene Castle.

She heard a man call her pretty. A girl flung a white cape around her, tossed a veil of golden tulle over her head, and gave her a great bouquet of varicolored flowers. "You're lovely," some one said. The man in white pointed her way to where a pole, bright in ribbons, had been set. "You stand there," he told her.

Girls moved around in a weaving dance. The ribbons twisted and untwisted. The hall became a blur. She wanted to laugh, and she wanted to cry. Why had she come here with Wally? Why had they tried to win? Why hadn't she told John to come over tonight? She ached for him with sudden yearning. Wouldn't this ever be over?

It was over at last, with the man in white pressing an envelope into her hand, and Wally dismantling her of the property finery. On the street outside she divided the money with him. "Let's spend it tonight," he pleaded.

"Where?"

"Well, we could go to Crown Point."

"You're crazy." She went straight to the street-car corner. "When I get married, it won't be that way." Against his protests she lapsed into silence which she held all the way home. Undaunted, however, Wally bade her good-by. "We'll dance somewhere else tomorrow night," was his farewell.

JOHN was not at the gate the next evening, and she felt both glad and sorry as she dodged Wally and went home alone.

"What's this I hear?" her father demanded as she entered the house.

"I don't know."

"I hear ye won the prize for dancing with Wally Welch."

"We won a hundred dollars."

"Was it worth it?" he asked shrewdly.

"I guess so," she said; but as she sat alone in the darkness after dinner that night, she questioned the value of her revenge. She had lost John, if she had ever really had him. She had, in exchange, fifty dollars, the thought of an empty triumph, and Wally Welch's dubious proposal. Life looked tricky, and tasted ashy. The tears came to her eyes as she looked down Parmenter Street, and the thought of her loneliness oppressed her until she could endure it no longer. She was rising to go toward Darrah's when she saw John talking to Edna O'Malley. Mollie's heart closed as if snapped in a vise. She turned sharply, and went to the pool-room at the corner, standing at the door to call Wally. "All right, bright-eyes," he answered, and slipped into his coat.

Night after night, as the lilacs in the square withered, she went to dances with Wally Welch. Parmenter Street, not knowing of that one perfect night of her happiness, drew its own deductions. "Tis a world upside down," Mrs. Darrah said, "with my Johnny chasin' with that light-headed O'Malley twin, and you dancin' with Wally Welch." Mary Kate Cunningham wrote a poem on lost love which Mollie would not let her repeat. Agnes Monahan took it on her kindly soul to warn Mollie, but the warning went unheeded. Mrs. Bannon read Mrs. Collins a sermon on the waywardness of girls, but Daniel discounted it by saying she was jealous of his daughter. Sometimes Mollie met John, but she passed him with a greeting so casual that it gave him no chance for explanation,

if he had one to offer. Twice he walked home from church with Edna, passing Mollie with a glance as resentful as her own. "He has proper pride," Mary Kate, who loved lovers, and who remembered the night she had found them together, tried to tell Mollie; but she would not listen. "So have I," was all she would say.

She did not intend that the propriety of her pride should lead her far afield with Wally, but the knowledge that her family and her neighborhood had grown hostile to her made her champion of his cause, and she found herself defending him with a warmth of feeling she mislabeled affection. Almost every night he asked her to marry him, and every night he entreated her to become his dancing partner. It was not until she overheard Mrs. Darrah telling Mrs. Bannon of her dread lest her Johnny marry Edna that Mollie accepted the inevitable. That night she told Wally that she would marry him.

She had not realized how far she had been drifting out of her old way of life until she tried to tell her father of her decision. Tears choked her, and she turned away without fulfillment of her intention. The need of confession pressed upon her, however, and she turned to her nearest neighbor, Mrs. Cunningham, with some apprehended realization of the older woman's sympathy. Mary Kate poured it out upon her in too full measure. "God help you!" she sighed. "Marryin' one man, and lovin' another!"

"I don't," said Mollie.

"Then," inquired Mary Kate, "why are you cryin'?"

"I'm—I'm happy."

AT the gate of Mary Kate's cottage she came face to face with John. "Good evening," she said unsteadily. "Good evening," he answered gravely. She half-hesitated, then passed him. When she turned, as if to recall him, he had gone into his own house. "He might have said something," she thought angrily. "I've known him always."

Wally, calling for her a little later, found her pliant to his suggestion that they go to the Thirty-fifth Street restaurant where a dancing couple might find employment. She felt strangely listless as they transferred from one car to another, and curiously critical of her future husband. She shrugged in thought that her mother must have loved her father, and yet come to this lethargic sadness of acceptance of existence. It was Destiny; that was all. She was sorry for Wally, she decided, but sorrier for herself, and ready to drift down any stream into which he rowed.

The stream of the restaurant was, she saw at once, muddy. There was something sinister in its dimness, in the faces of the waiters, in the attitude of the patrons. Everyone seemed to know Wally, but this failed to reassure her. She had a sense of foreboding, heightened by the beat of the drum in the orchestra. There was an atmosphere of the jungle about the place which she hated even while it fascinated her. "Let's not stay," she begged of Wally.

"Oh, be yourself," he bade her.

She strove to laugh as they danced, but her laughter rang hollow. "Don't dance like that," she warned him, but he only held her closer. "No censors here," he boasted, and would not release her as she drew away. Moment by moment the intoxication of the strumming banjos, of the beating drum, of the surging crowd on the floor dizzied her brain. Wally kissed her as they danced, and in a mixture of emotions, loathing battling with desire, she let him. Then, as if a wind had cleared the air, she hated h-

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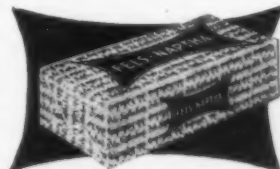
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FELS-NAPTHA

THE GOLDEN BAR WITH THE CLEAN NAPTHA ODOR

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Philadelphia

self in memory of John Darrah's kiss. "Let me go," she struggled.

"Not now," said Wally.

She tried to slip from his arms, but they tightened about her. She had a confused sense, as they moved, of being whirled past tables where men and women sat watching her with inflamed eyes. She breathed a little prayer of her childhood, and sought again to escape from Wally's grasp. Just as she passed a doorway in the rear of the room, she saw her chance. She must get out, she felt with the passion of terror. Something terrible threatened her, the climax of her own folly in trusting Wally Welch. She wrenched herself away, and dashed through the doorway, with Wally too dazed by the suddenness of her escape to follow; her on the instant. Behind her she heard a sudden outcry. She sped down a corridor, hearing footsteps thudding after her, found another door, and flung it open. She had come to an arway which opened to an alley, and she rushed through it breathlessly. From the restaurant came the sound of shouts.

Still terrified, she leaned against the brick wall of a building. Some one spoke her name, and she whirled around, gone beyond speech, to see John Darrah near her.

"ARE you all right?" he asked her. She nodded, her eyes wide with questioning. "I wasn't in there," he explained. "I was outside when I saw the police coming. I went in after you to get you, but you'd just run out the other door. I came around this way."

"The police?" she managed to gasp.

"Sure," he said. "They raid that place about once a week."

Rage against Wally for having brought

her there arose to choke her, but disgust at herself for having let him halted what protest she might have made. "Why were you here?" she flung at John.

"I was watching out for you," he said. "I never thought Wally was much to be trusted, so I got on the job. Mad at me?"

He tried to laugh, but she burst into stormy weeping. He looked at her uncertainly a moment, then put his arm over her shoulder. "Don't—don't touch me," she pleaded.

"Come on home," he said. He led her to the alley entrance, guarded now by a stalwart policeman, who gave them a keen look, and let them pass. She moved close to John as if for protection, but as they came to the street, she drew away. "What's the matter, Mollie?" he asked her.

"I don't know why you watched me," she said. "Did—did Edna tell you to?"

"Edna didn't tell me anything."

"But didn't you—"

"Go out with her? No, I didn't, not even the night my mother told you I did."

"But everyone said—"

"Don't you believe me?"

"Yes."

"We've been awful fools, Mollie."

"I've been worse than that," she said passionately. "I hate myself. I hate Wally. I hate Edna. I—"

"You don't hate me." He stepped in front of her, and caught her hands. "You love me, Mollie. You said you did."

"How do you know I've not changed?"

"Mary Kate told me," he chuckled. "She wrote a poem about it and gave me a copy. It has fifty-seven verses." He pulled some folded sheets from his pocket. "Here's the first." And he read aloud in the light of the street-lamp:

"She's the Queen o' the May and the toast o' the town,
She dons a bright smile with her glittering crown—"

"It's awful," Mollie cried.

"Sure," he agreed, "but I love Mary Kate. Here's the chorus:

"But her heart aches in mis'ry and sorrow today
When she mourns the true lover she sent far away."

Like sun through storm-clouds came her laughter. He took her hand. "It's true, isn't it?" he demanded.

"Yes," she said, "it's true."

"Then nothing's going to come between us again."

A cloud drifted back. "But your mother—" she thrust in.

John Darrah grinned. "Don't you ever tell her, Mollie," he said, "but she's a bluff, and we've called her. She's so glad I'm not going to marry Edna that she'll kiss you."

"She won't," said Mollie.

But she did. That was, however, long after—all of twenty hours after—her son had performed that rite. Unlike her son, Mrs. Darrah did public penance in the Collins kitchen. Then she surveyed Mollie critically as if she had not known her from her babyhood. "You're prettier than Edna," she said, "and smarter, and you can buy a lot of linen with the fifty dollars you won with Wally Welch, if you wait for the sales. Now, Mrs. Collins, dear, if you'll just loan me three—"

Mollie heard no more. She was off to Maytime, to love, to John. All three were waiting for her out in Parmenter Street.

THE DEVIL OF DOOMSDAY

(Continued from page 63)

upon to step on the counterfeit stone if he decided to examine the swaying bait more closely.

As Jules approached the place, the snow told the story of what had happened. The trap had been sprung, and all around it were scattered masses of silky, fluffy black fur with long silvery hairs showing here and there. At the sight the half-breed gave a bitter curse. He had caught that prize of a lifetime, a silver fox; and the malignant Indian devil which shadowed him had ruined a skin worth more than all the other pelts of the season put together.

FROM that day Jules followed his lines no more. All of his skill and knowledge, all of the wiles and wisdom handed down from generations of trapping forbears, were focused on achieving the death of his arch-enemy. It was the mind of a man trained and stored through hundreds of thousands of years of human life on earth, against the naked cunning and bare instinct of a still older beast—and the beast had the better of the contest. Everywhere the man spread his baits, and sowed his traps beneath the snow, in the trees, under the water—yet they all came to naught. The wolverene would expose the most carefully concealed trap, spring it by kicking pieces of ice against its pan, and devour the bait. As for dead-falls, he tore them to pieces contemptuously—nor ever trusted his neck to the snares which had noosed so many of the great cats.

At last in desperation Jules tried a spring-gun. On the bank of a little lake he set up his cocked rifle concealed in some low bushes, and fixed in front of its muzzle the carcass of a gray squirrel tied tightly to a cord fastened to the trigger. Then he blocked and blockaded the gun with brush and tree-trunks so as to force the wolverene to approach the bait from in front.

The tracks the next day told what had happened. The carcajou had gone up to the bait, smelled it carefully, but left it untouched. He had then forced his way through the massed brush, hurling aside the logs which blocked his way, and coming up behind the gun, had started to gnaw in two the cord fastened to the trigger. At the first tug the gun had gone off, and the carcajou likewise had exploded, leaping clear to the top of the barrier with a single bound. There he had stayed until convinced that there was no further danger—when he had descended and leisurely eaten the bait. Thereafter he had turned his attention to the gun which had so startled him. There were marks of fierce teeth all along the barrel and scored deeply into the walnut stock, and the hammer had been pulled back and twisted clear off, leaving the rifle entirely useless as a weapon.

That night the old trapper dreamed again that menacing eyes were watching him through the cracks in the cabin. Twice he started up out of a fitful sleep and grasped his useless gun, roused by the sound of gnawing from outside. Each time he decided that it was only a porcupine exercising his big orange-colored chisels on the remains of some old pork-barrel in accordance with the exasperating custom of the quill-pig.

Daylight came at last and convinced Jules that the fight between himself and the devil was to the death. The lowest log of the cabin wall had been gnawed nearly through, and everywhere in the snow outside, the tracks of great splay feet showed who it was that all night long had toiled to break in. The teeth of a wolverene are among the fiercest fighting teeth of any mammal, but they are not made for gnawing. Yet that one had nearly cut through a log which would have taxed the powers of even a beaver, and had worked with such fury that

the fresh cutting was all stained with blood from his gashed gums. That day, when the half-breed started out to examine the last set of traps which he had planted for the undoing of his enemy, he carried an ax, afraid to venture out even by daylight unarmed.

WHEN he came back at noontime, he found the door of the cabin gaping wide. Closing it hastily that morning, it had failed to latch, and his enemy had taken advantage of his absence to wreck the place. Every one of his traps, as well as the broken rifle, were gone, together with his blankets; and all of his pelts, baled or drying, had been destroyed; worst of all, the store of provisions on which he depended for bare life had been devoured or defiled past all using.

The old trapper stared at his wrecked cabin incredulously. For half a lifetime he had lured uncounted thousands of his lesser brethren to their death, and he could not realize that one of them had at last dared to match its craft and courage against his own. Yet as he looked about him, he was forced to admit himself worsted. His traps, his food and his blankets were all gone; nor had he any weapon left save the ax over his shoulder; and the nearest place where he could find help was a lumberman's camp thirty miles across the mountains.

With a deep-throated curse against the lurking foe who had brought him to such a pass, he started down the mountain-side. As he came to the first bend in the trail, he looked back for a last glimpse of the ruined cabin which he was leaving. There, black against the snow, stood a squat, humped figure. Even as he stared at the carcajou, the grim beast once again shaded its eyes and under a huge black paw regarded him with sinister intentness. With a little shiver of dread the trapper fled down the trail, to return no more.



"OUR EIGHT-YEAR-OLD GIRL would lose four or five weeks of school work, besides being incapacitated while she was in school from attacks of stomach trouble. I decided to give Fleischmann's Yeast a trial. I began with half a cake mixed with peanut butter on bread, and then as I found that the yeast was going to succeed, I served it in many different ways. My child has never had another attack of stomach trouble since I gave her yeast."

MRS. G. A. VIELE, Costa Mesa, Cal.



"AFTER I GAVE BIRTH to my child, I felt very much 'run down.' Had constant trouble with my stomach, and what troubled me most—I suffered from terrible sties. Finally an eye specialist prescribed Fleischmann's Yeast. After two months there wasn't a trace left of the sties. My complexion improved wonderfully. I no longer have an aversion for food. And I manage to keep and look young with the help of Fleischmann's Yeast."

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What Everybody Knows

The danger of clogged intestines / the tragedy of lowered vitality

The evils of digestive troubles and disfiguring skin eruptions



"INVALIDED from Royal Navy with chronic constipation. Went to India. . . . Advised to try Canada. Was just able to get into army, but after two and a half years in trenches was as sick as ever. Returned to Canada totally unfit and pensioned. In 1919 I gave Fleischmann's Yeast a fair trial, thank God. Six months afterward I passed for life insurance and my pension stopped. I am now absolutely fit and never need a laxative; and this is after over 20 years of suffering."

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JAMES F. BROWN, Allentown, Pa.

M A D M A R R I A G E

(Continued from page 83)

THE change in Peter's attitude toward his work, already indicated, became during that spring and summer a definite condition of mind. In the larger canvases he was finding himself. He was working with joy, a surp sense of his power. He did four good paintings by midsummer. He was, moreover, in fairly easy circumstances, for Lablache had sold another of his smaller things.

It was near the end of July that Peter, now sufficiently fortified against the inevitable, had taken the train for New York with two of his new canvases. After the business at Lablache's gallery, he entered Tommy's apartment at the Ritz with an eagerness slightly modified by his infelicitous air. But Tommy, in spite of the firm resolves expressed in her recent letters, stood poised for a moment at the door of her dressing-room, and then with a joyous cry came rushing into his arms.

"Oh, Peter—you dear old thing! I'm so glad—so glad."

They kissed and then stood apart, hands clasped, regarding each other, Peter grinning like a schoolboy caught in a transgression, Tommy star-eyed.

"How brown and well you're looking!" she said. "I don't believe you've missed me a minute—"

"Oh, say—Tommy!"

"Have you?"

He caught her in his arms again, and she yielded. It was their moment. They deserved it. Tommy at last drew away.

"How stupid of us to think things could ever be any other way!" she said with great solemnity. Peter saved the air helplessly but said nothing. She smiled and drew him to a chair. "You must sit here and tell me all about everything."

Peter frowned. "What's the use? Everything that really matters is right here."

She touched his brown hand. "I like to hear you say that—even if it isn't true."

His blue gaze was perturbed.

"I mean," she added soberly, "the work you're doing, the work you've got to do."

"Yes—work," Peter muttered slowly. "But that isn't all of life. I used to think it was—but I've been thinking. I've stayed away as long as I could. I needed to see you such a lot."

"Yes, I know. But it was better so. Think how much gladder it makes you to see me now."

He bent his head. "Oh, it's all so hopeless! I might divorce her, I suppose. But I can't do that, Tommy. I don't believe in divorce. I never have believed in it. There may be cases—but most divorce is just—well, legalized prostitution. I went into this thing with my eyes wide open. I've got to stick. While there's a chance of Josie's needing me, I've got to be ready to help her."

Tommy was silent. This point of view on marriage had never been given to her.

"You really believe all that, Peter?" she asked in a hushed voice.

"Yes. I've always thought of marriage as a sacrament—an oath. If you make oaths in the marriage service or in anything else, you've got to keep 'em. It wouldn't be honorable if you didn't. Most people just flop into marriage—and out. I can't do that. What you swear to is so definite, so painfully definite, so simply—but so damnably—effective. Love—honor—cherish—death do us part. They're just words, of course, but they're said with a purpose. I thought pity might be love. Honor? There was honor in Josie trying to be good. Cherish! I swore to that. Don't you see? Good God, how hopeless it all is!"

"But Josie Brant—she's forfeited the right—" Tommy swallowed painfully, then

rose and walked away from him to the window. She had a struggle there, but when she turned back, her face was calm.

"Of course," she said, her voice uncertain, "I understand."

Peter went on: "I've been turning this thing back and forth in my mind, until I'm sick of thinking. Because the answer always comes out the same: I've got to stick to it. Oh, Tommy dear," he groaned, "what a fool I've been!"

She smiled at him tenderly.

"Well, there's no use going over that."

"No, there isn't."

There was a silence as though each was aware of the futility of discussion. Then at last Tommy rose and walked the floor.

"Peter, I've never thought much about the obligations of marriage," she said quickly.

"I might say that until recently I've never thought very seriously about anything. But it's hard for me to believe in the obligations you speak of. Of course an oath is an oath, whether you swear it at the altar or at a garden-party. But swearing it to cherish a woman when she won't let you cherish her is something else. How can you keep an oath like that? You can't help a woman who runs away from you. You can't love her; you can hardly even pity her. And as for honor—the whole thing is a lie, Peter, from beginning to end, a dreadful lie. She's given you up, thrown you over, dragged your good name up and down Broadway—God knows what. You've done everything that you can do; you've squared the account of everything you owed her. You've got your own right to happiness."

PETER had risen and was staring at her with an air deeply perturbed. She was expressing in the simplest terms the thoughts that had come constantly to plague him—the enemies he had resolutely dismissed.

She glanced at him and saw the puzzled frown, the air of abstraction. As many people had discovered, that air was one of the symptoms of an inflexible determination. His look startled and rebuked her, but she had already gone too far to recant. She was greatly disturbed again, for her love had consumed her reason.

"Don't listen to me, Peter," she cried.

"Don't listen! But I've got to talk. I've got to go on. I told you when you came here that I'd be calm and self-contained. But that was a lie, and I think I must have known it was a lie when I wrote it. I can't see you throwing away your life, my life too, for this woman who is nothing to you—who wants to be rid of you. You married her out of pity. She's forfeited the right even to that. No man has got to stay tied for life to a woman who dishonors him. The law recognizes that in New York—everywhere. You've got your rights, and the law will respect them. You think there's still a chance of your saving this woman. Well, you can't. She isn't the kind anybody can save. You've done your duty as you saw it. You tried an impossible experiment, and you've failed. You've got your right to happiness too. Everybody has." She threw out her arms in a wild gesture. "Oh, Peter! It's my heart that's speaking to you. I don't know what it's said, but what it wants to say is that you can't go on suffering forever just for one mistake. That isn't justice to you—or to me."

There was a brief silence before Peter answered her.

"You mustn't talk like that, Tommy," he said slowly. "You've been saying some things—I shouldn't listen to. Perhaps under other conditions— But these are different. I hoped you understood. There may be

some reasons for divorce. I don't know. But there are no reasons, no excuses for me that could justify what you advise. You want me clean, Tommy. You said so once. You saw things then as I saw them. For the love that came to us was so fine that we didn't want anything to tarnish it. I married Josie Brant—why, God knows! I was in a kind of fog of illusion. Perhaps it wouldn't have come to that if those people had let me alone. I believed I was doing the right thing in giving her another chance. It didn't matter about me. I'd never thought of marrying. You seemed to belong to another world. Your friendship—well, that came from another world too—a sort of patronage, half satirical, for one who'd done you a service. I hadn't even dared to dream of you. And yet all the while I must have been dreaming of you. And then—" He halted and turned away.

"And—then?"

"I—I came out of the fog," he muttered. "You were there—a reality to point back and show me how ghastly—my mistake—"

"Oh, Peter! Why did you?"

He turned toward the window, muttering: "I've been a fool always—from the beginning. If there was any way of my doing the wrong thing, I always found it. And yet I never learned anything. Mistakes don't cost very much when measured in terms of money. But I didn't know how terribly they could cost when measured in terms of—love and happiness."

Tommy had risen and put her arm around his shoulder. He turned and held her silently for a moment.

"Let me finish, my dear. I've said I'd always been a fool. When I'm through, you'll say I still am. But I can't help what I think and feel. If I thought and felt differently, I wouldn't be myself, but some one else. All my love is yours—the things of the spirit," he whispered, "the tenderness of hope deferred, the dream of—unfulfilled desire—" He kissed her on the brow and then released her gently, turning away. "But I've given my life, God help me, to Josie Brant, my will, my hands, my body. They belong to her. I swore to help her come back. That was my oath. That was what my marriage meant to me. If it meant it then, it must mean the same thing now. I've still got to be ready to help her if she'll let me. And it isn't just the marriage; it's my resolve that you're challenging. I made it solemnly. What does it matter if she's failed me? I've not failed—I'm not dishonored as long as I'm true to myself, as long as I'm ready to carry on. Don't you see, Tommy? There's only one thing that could dishonor me—letting her sink farther and farther into the mire while I deserted her for you." His voice had sunk to a hoarse whisper. "Don't tempt me with yourself—because it's the one thing I want most in the world."

He sank into a chair and buried his face in his hands. She stood above him uncertainly, torn between the softness of his rebuff and the pain of his abnegation. But she knew now that his self-control had been greater than hers, that his idealism was more honest than her worldliness. His suffering reproached her, and she fell upon her knees beside him.

"Forgive me, Peter," she whispered.

He smiled at her and kissed her hands.

"I thought I was strong enough," she murmured, "but I'm not. It's you who are the stronger, after all. I'll try to help you to be honest with yourself. You could never be happy with me if you didn't do what you thought was right. I see; I understand. It was just a mad dream of mine, Peter dear; and it's all over now."

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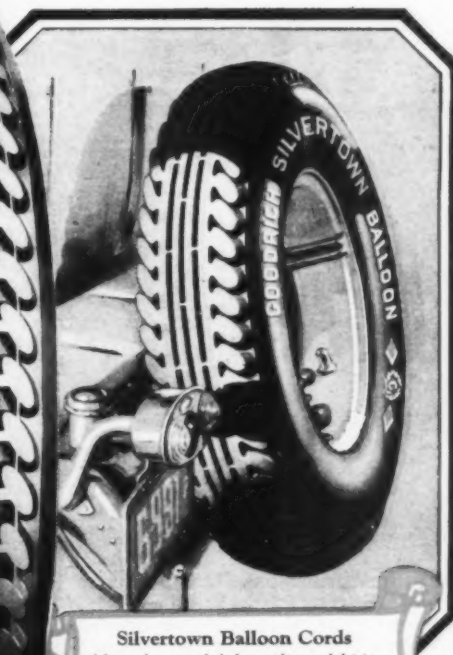
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At last he helped her to her feet and they stood for a moment of silence; then a flash of humor from Tommy relieved the situation.

"You wouldn't think it immoral, Peter," she said with a wry smile, "if I asked you to sit on the divan here and let me hold your hand?"

Chapter Nineteen

IT was shortly after this interview that there occurred an incident which gave Tommy a new idea of the false position in which she had placed herself. For her affair with Peter Randle, from being a private matter became, through an inadvertent remark of Lola Oliver's, a topic for the tea-tables and studio parties of Tommy's crowd, and was thus carried forth the length and breadth of Manhattan Island. The information was sifted down through various social strata until it reached the ears of Josie Randle, who was immediately aware of opportunities for mischief on a large scale, for retribution and perhaps for profit.

Accordingly, one afternoon in September as Tommy came in from a drive, she was informed by her maid Lucette that Mrs. Peter Randle had called during her absence but that she would return between five and six, hoping to find Miss Keith at home. Tommy frowned at the clock. It was after five already. Josie Brant! Why? She meant no good, of course, either to Peter or Tommy, and deserved only a contemptuous denial of admittance. This was Tommy's first thought. Her second was that it might be interesting to see in what way Peter's wife had changed. And between the two impulses curiosity won. She answered the telephone when the bell rang, and in an ingratiating tone invited the visitor to her apartment.

Lucette admitted the caller, and Tommy emerged almost at once from her dressing-room, wearing the smile of the tight-rope-walker who finds in her precarious footing a melancholy pleasure. Josie, she noted at once, was attired in the very height of the fashion as viewed from the sidewalk at Times Square; but her complexion had been applied with an art beyond the reach of grace, and she created in other respects an impression of being rather frail and rather desperate.

"It's very polite of you to see me, Miss Keith," Josie said, appraising the value of the entire room, including Tommy, in fitting glances.

"Delighted," Tommy said coolly, and waited inquiringly.

"Well," Josie went on rapidly, "it seemed to me that as you and Peter were such friends, it would be all right for me to come down to see you and—er—talk things over in a general sort of way."

"Oh! What things had you in mind?"

"Well, of course, there's no use in my telling you that Peter and I didn't get along. You must know that. He didn't make enough money, and he treated me very badly."

Tommy rose.

"If you've only come here to talk about Peter Randle, you might as well go at once," she said.

Josie gave a shrug that set her ear-pendants dancing.

"Oh, now, don't get huffy. I didn't really come here to complain about Peter, but I thought you might like to know my side of—"

"Well, I don't want to know. If you've got anything in particular to talk about, you'd better confine your remarks to that. Though I can't imagine what—"

"I'll come to that," said Josie coolly, "if you'll just sit down again and give me a few moments."

Tommy sat upright on the edge of a chair, and Josie went on:

"I said that Peter and I didn't get along. Since it hurts your feelings, I won't tell you just what happened, but we *didn't* get along, and of course you know I've left him—for the present, anyhow," she added with a narrow glance at Tommy's face.

"I don't see where all this is leading—"

"I'm coming to that. You and I didn't seem to hit it off very well. There was a reason—we went go into that, either. But it's a funny world, and it's queer how things happen to some people. What I mean is, you and I, and Peter and Jack Salazar. You'd think there'd be enough men and women in the world without four people getting mixed up with each other the way we've been. . . . Now, don't get huffy again. You'd better listen to what I've got to say. It may be worth your while."

"Go on," said Tommy, hiding her contempt with difficulty.

"Well, everybody knows you and my husband are great friends, and of course I know it. I guess you see something to him that I don't. You've always been rich, and you don't have to bother about whether a man can make a living or not. But I do. I want a man who can give me three square meals a day, and maybe cake on Sundays. I like to have nice clothes and a place where I can show them off. That's not asking too much of any man, is it?"

Tommy sat immovable, in a condition of fury, well suppressed. Josie did not look at Tommy. But her impudence had all the conviction of courage.

"That's one of the reasons why I left my husband—only one of them, mind you. There's plenty of others—worse ones. But we'll just say I left him because he couldn't make money enough, and because we didn't get along. I suppose some of the reasons are my fault. I'm not perfect, God knows. But then, neither is anyone else, so far as I can see. Of course I *might* go back to Red Bridge. Peter wants me to go back there. I guess you know why. He's got some sort of a contract with God to keep me from going to the devil." She threw her head back and laughed at her witticism. "I guess I'm old enough now to look after myself, and Peter's got all he can do to make his own way without looking after me. Well, there's no use making believe any longer. I've been thinking about things, and I'm disposed to be reasonable. Peter is my husband. I might go back to him after a while. They say he's selling a picture now and then. We might be able to get along. But I don't want to be a dog in the manger. I don't love Peter the way you do."

"I think I've heard about enough of this," Tommy rose and turning her back, went toward the door of her dressing-room.

"Well, there's no shame to you in that, is there?" asked Josie keenly.

"Shame!" Tommy twisted around toward her. Nothing that her visitor could have said would have detained her more effectively. Peter's wife spoke with great confidence, upon information that was already common property.

Tommy made no further reply. Already, it seemed, the dignity of her affection for Peter had been tainted by this woman's tongue.

"Of course there's no shame in loving a man, even if he does happen to be another woman's husband. I'm reasonable about that. Peter comes here to see you when he's in New York. It's no secret, is it? I don't mind. And if I don't want him, I don't see why you shouldn't have him. That's what I came here to see you about. It took a good deal of nerve on my part, and you haven't made it any too easy for me. But now that I've told you, I don't see why we can't sit down and talk things over as one woman of the world to another."



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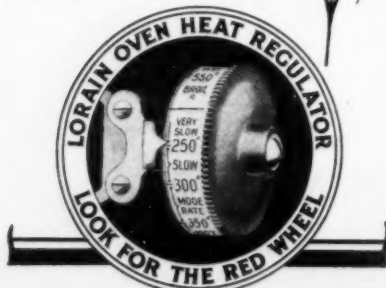
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TOMMY had paused at the table, where she stood staring at her unpleasant visitor, wanting to go away from her presence, and yet still curious to hear complete the terms that were, of course, to accompany this extraordinary proposition.

"You have something else to say?" she asked calmly.

"Oh, no," said Josie, rising. "Nothing much. I could get a divorce from Peter for what's happened, in New Jersey. Or he could get one from me, if he preferred. Such things are managed. The main thing is, that the affair should be arranged in a—in a friendly way."

"And at a proper price!" put in Tommy. "I understand."

"Well, of course, these things cost money. You couldn't expect me to pay the lawyers and everything. Now, could you?"

Tommy's contempt rushed through her in an angry flood, but she controlled her speech, remembering that if curiosity had been a motive in permitting this visit, she had a duty—to discover, for Peter's sake, his wife's address and any other items of information that might help him in his persistent errand of compassion. A duty—but difficult.

"No—ah—of course not," she said calmly.

"Such things are expensive."

Josie's slanting eyes glanced at Tommy's face—rather hopefully, and yet slightly dubious at the reservation in her tone.

"Yes, very. And then, you see, I haven't any money myself except what I can make. I could go back to Peter now and demand my rights—since he's getting along better. But I'd be willing to leave him permanently and give him a divorce if I could be sure that I'd have enough—for a while, anyhow—to get along on. That's reasonable, isn't it?"

"Well," Tommy said again, "I suppose so."

Josie frowned and glanced at the side wall. Acquisitiveness was nicely balanced against suspicion. But the vulgar mind takes alternatives boldly, and so she plunged.

"I'll tell you what I'll do. You can take my proposition or leave it—as you like. I need money. I don't make any secret of that. You don't need it. You've got so much that you can straighten this whole business out and set Peter free, without any trouble for anybody. If I get the divorce, Peter needn't even know that you'd had anything to do with it."

"Oh, I see."

"Well, it sounds all right, doesn't it?"

Tommy was finding it astonishing that she had succeeded in keeping the calmness of her demeanor, that she hadn't had the woman shown out long before. But she questioned coolly: "And what do you want me to give you—ah—for your freedom?"

"Twenty thousand dollars and all expenses," said Josie promptly.

"I see," Tommy replied. "Twenty thousand dollars." Only twice the cost of Tommy's automobile, for Peter's freedom and her own happiness! She smiled at her thought.

"And that's little enough," said Josie easily. "You'd never miss it, and it would mean a lot to me. Well, what do you say?"

Tommy spoke coolly:

"I can't decide such an important matter in a moment. I—ah—I'd have to think it over. But if you'll give me your address, I might communicate with you later."

"Oh, you want to think about it. Well, of course you've got a right to do that. My address is Madden's Garage, East Thirty-third. I live upstairs, but they'll take a message."

Tommy took a few paces up and down.

"And suppose," she said slowly, "that I should decide not to pay you for this divorce?"

Josie twisted toward her, aware of the slight, almost indefinable change in her voice and manner.

"Suppose," Tommy continued coolly, "that I should tell you that I couldn't consider your proposal, that as much as I despise you and pity your husband, I wouldn't soil my money by giving you a dollar of it for such a purpose or any other?"

And Tommy rang the bell for her maid. Josie rose, her eyes drawn to mere slits of venom.

"Oh, so that's it!" she said, choking with her rage. "I might have known you'd cut off your nose to spite your face, just because I got the best of you with Jack Salazar and Peter Randle. Well, I might have given my husband a divorce if you'd acted half-way decent about it. But I tell you now that he'll never sue for one. Never! And I'll have my rights from him too. You'll see. I'll make him wish—"

At this moment Lucette entered in response to Tommy's ring.

"Show this woman out, Lucette," she said quietly. "And then open the window. The room needs airing."

Josie's small figure seemed to tremble with tension like a spring that has been drawn too tight. She glanced from Tommy to Lucette, who walked before her to the door and opened it. Then with a gasp and a quick enraged rush, she vanished.

Chapter Twenty

NO one ever heard the true tale of what happened at Madden's Garage when Peter, acting promptly on Tommy's information, went there to try to persuade his wife to give up the life that she was leading and return with him to Red Bridge. He merely told Tommy that his efforts had been unsuccessful and gave no details of the conversation with Josie or that with John Madden himself. But supplying the missing passages in Peter's bare statement, Tommy concluded that Josie was living, at least temporarily, in the apartment above the garage and at Mr. John Madden's expense.

The interview with John Madden, following that with Josie, it appeared, had taken place in the office of the garage. There had been no physical combat, however. Peter wore a disappointed, hopeless air, and spoke of John Madden in a casual way which indicated that the man was not greatly to be blamed. Peter had, it seemed, to Tommy's great relief, relinquished the idea of attempting to punish every man who caught Josie's fancy.

Tommy didn't know just what she had hoped for as a result of Peter's visit. She felt that she needed some sort of reward for having so splendidly done her duty. Perhaps she had thought that Peter's eyes might have been opened at last to the folly of his continued toleration. But this was to be the winter of Tommy's discontent. The future, as far as Peter was concerned, seemed utterly hopeless, for he had given her such definite proofs of his steadfastness to his marriage vows that Tommy, knowing how he was being wronged, felt her loyalty to his point of view unequal to the strain. She was quite certain that she loved Peter as much as ever, but since he came to New York so seldom, the forces of propinquity were lacking. She had promised to wait for Peter forever, but she was beginning to realize that forever was a long time.

These unpleasant moments for Tommy passed, as unpleasant moments will, and when Peter came to New York at Christmas she was, of course, unaffectedly delighted to see him. Wingate and his daughter Mary had come on too, for a round of the theaters and a spree, and so Tommy got up a little supper in her apartment, adding Lola Oliver and Jimmy Blake, who could always be expected to lend to the gayety of such occasions.

When the others had gone, Peter stayed.

He: "I simply must make more money!"
 She: "Yes, but you never do anything about it."



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He was very reserved and kept himself under a greater control than Tommy thought fitting to the occasion. She kissed him bewitchingly, but his air of abstraction, usually understood, provoked her. She managed to forget that the troubles that weighed so heavily upon Peter were her troubles too, and showed her pique in the sort of cruelty that women often employ toward the persons they love the best.

"Did you know, Peter dear," she asked with an excess of sweetness that would have warned a wiser man, "that I have had a most splendid offer of marriage?"

Peter straightened, staring at her, as though upon her face had been written the day and hour of his death.

"Judson Waite, my dear, the banker. He's quite splendid. Millions! Handsome, cultured and only forty-six. He's divorced, of course, but that didn't matter to him. He adores me, Peter—says he can't live without me."

Peter relinquished Tommy's hand and rose with a bewildered air. If she had expected to make him miserable, the results of her experiment must have been entirely satisfactory.

"Of course you've heard of him," she went on coolly. "One of the most brilliant of the downtown crowd. The kind of man accustomed to leadership—good family, fine social position; he got the divorce from her, you see, for good reasons. He's very much alone, and he wants me to give grace to his houses and yachts and camps. He says he has always wanted children—"

"Don't, Tommy—don't!" Peter groaned. She bent toward him smiling, but Peter did not turn.

"I just thought I'd tell you," she said more gently.

WHAT she didn't tell him was that the conquest of Judson Waite, who was a collector of modern American paintings and a director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, was the astonishing culmination of a protracted siege which Tommy had laid in behalf of Peter and Peter's work. Judson Waite was the bellwether that Tommy had been seeking, and she had used every art in developing this casual acquaintance into a friendship that might be put to service. Nor had she told Peter that yesterday Judson Waite had gone to the Lablache gallery with Tommy and bought one of Peter's large canvases, "Spring in the Valley." Peter had not seen Lablache and did not even know that the canvas had been sold. This startling proposal of Mr. Waite's had taken Tommy quite by surprise, but did much to invigorate her self-esteem.

"Of course," Tommy added slowly, "I refused him. But then, such men are not accustomed to being refused in anything."

Peter turned a white face toward her.

"I know—it was to be expected—of course. I've been mad—ever to dream of you. I'm not—I should have known—I'm not the kind of a man for love. It's all too hopeless. I've got no chance. I can't stand in your way. I've never asked you to be true to me, have I? You offered that. There's no future in your loyalty to me. I—I've got to give you up. I want you to be happy. If you think this man will give you happiness, I—I want you to take him, Tommy."

He turned toward the door, his voice

smothered with the effort of self-control. If he had burst into tears, the effect upon Tommy could not have been more harrowing.

"Peter," she whispered, rushing to him, "please! Please take it all back. I've been cruel to you—cruel."

Her arms went around his shoulders; her face was turned up to his. He fondled her and kissed her gently.

"I—I'm glad you told me, Tommy," he said quietly. "You've shown me the real state of things. You were meant for a life like—like the one he offers you. Wealth, honors and—children."

"But I don't want his homes—his wealth or—his children. I—I want yours, my dear."

He yielded to her caresses, holding her close in a moment of passion and forgetfulness, the sweeter because it was forbidden.

"I don't want him, Peter," she murmured. "I have no ambitions—I never had. All he represents is outside my life. It doesn't mean anything to me. My only ambition is for you; my only passion is to take a part in your life, to have you for my own—to see you successful and happy. I want you, Peter dear. I want you so much. . . ."

"Give her up, Peter," she whispered after a moment, her eyes wet. "For my sake, if not for your own! Give her up. There's no law of God or man to compel you to be loyal to a woman like that. Divorce her, Peter; I ask you to. You'll never regret it. I'll make you happy again—"

She felt his arms relax. His eyes closed as though to gain strength by shutting out the brief vision of his happiness. He put a hand up as though to defend himself from an invisible enemy and turned away.

"Divorce!" he groaned. "I—I can't do that. You shouldn't have asked it of me."

He walked away from her with long strides to the door and turned, his arms gesturing wildly. "Yes, you had the right to ask it of me. It was your right. But I—I refuse. It's the only thing I can do. I've been selfish to stand in your way—to expect anything of you. I give you up."

"Peter, don't!"

"I've got to give you up. This sort of thing can't go on. Its sweetness is terrible. It takes my strength—weakens my resolution."

"Be weak, Peter," she pleaded desperately. "You are strong in so many things. Can't you be weak for me? Is it so much to ask?"

"Oh, Tommy, my dear!" Her voice, her tears, bewildered him. If he remained in the room, he knew that he was lost—she swayed toward him expectantly. But he gave her a frightened glance and turned away. "I give you up," she heard him say violently as he went toward the door. "I—I—give—you—up."

And in a moment the outside door crashed behind him.

"THE purchaser of your painting 'Spring in the Valley,'" wrote Lablache to Peter, who had taken the night train back to Red Bridge, "is Mr. Judson Waite, the banker and collector. The price is twenty-five hundred dollars, and a check for the amount, less my commission, is herewith inclosed. It may interest you further to learn that Mr. Waite, who is a member of the board of directors of the Metropolitan

"BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM," is the title of a penetrating story of marriage that RUPERT HUGHES has written for an early issue—one of the most vivid pieces of short fiction THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE has ever published, and one which seems to be a story of some one everybody knows.

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Museum of Art, is very much interested also in the small canvas of yours entitled 'Island Idyl' and has promised to suggest it to the curator of paintings for possible purchase and addition to the permanent collection. Permit me to congratulate you upon this very impressive triumph of your art in gaining the flattering approval of a man whose influence is so great."

Opposed to the terrible irony of this success was the other irony that Tommy was responsible for it. He understood now the meaning of her friendship for the banker and the motives that had prompted it.

THE moment with Tommy had offered the greatest temptation of Peter's life. Perhaps if he had not been at Josie's apartment before going to the Ritz, he might have yielded. Tommy did not know of Peter's visit of the afternoon, or of the eagerness of his attempt to take advantage of Josie's latest calamity and bring her to some sense of the impending dangers of her situation.

Peter had gone to Josie because she had sent for him—the first message that he had had from her since she had left Red Bridge. It was very obvious to Peter that she would not have sent for him if she hadn't been in need of money. He found her rather desperate, but quite without pride or any sense of compunction in her demands upon him. She was looking very badly, he thought, without the slightest vestiges of the rather common prettiness that had made her dependence upon him so affecting. She seemed very nervous and was taking some pills out of a dark little bottle that she kept in her hand-bag. It would have been difficult—even for Peter—to be sorry for her if he hadn't been sure that her frail body could not long endure the constant excitements upon which she lived. There might have been hope for her still if he could induce her to go to Red Bridge. Of course, she had refused. He had pleaded, threatened, cajoled, but she had only laughed at him. And yet, in spite of all this, Josie was, to the concepts of Peter's conscience, a part of himself, his own creature, his own responsibility.

From this interview, sordid and scurrilous on Josie's part, Peter had gone uptown to Tommy's dinner-table and his friends. Tommy had come to him, with her soft arms, and her dark eyes that reflected all the deep quiet things of his spirit, like brown pools in a forest—Tommy had come, in his need, offering him temptation. He realized now that if it hadn't been for that visit to Josie in the afternoon, he might have yielded. Instead, he had done something that was to destroy forever his peace of mind and her devotion, had brought an end to the one relationship that mattered most to him in all the world. For it was inconceivable that Tommy should continue to give him her affection. He had lost her—a loss that now seemed to have been inevitable from the beginning.

He sat down to write her, so that she might better understand the real claims that the woman he had married now had upon his charity and forbearance. But how could a man apologize to a woman for refusing to marry her? The idea was preposterous. There was nothing to be said. So he threw down his pen. If she wrote to him—

SHE did write to him. It was a very amiable letter, with none of the fury that has always been associated with the tongue or pen of the woman who has been scorned.

"Of course you wouldn't write! What is there to say when one has said the final word? You have given me up. That would be funny, Peter dear, if it wasn't so desperately serious. For how can you give up something you've never been able to possess? I was going to write *willing* instead of *able*, but that would have been unkind. It's only

your spirit that isn't willing—that terrible conscience of yours that puts duty ahead of everything. And yet even though I can't agree with it, I can—with an effort—admire its honesty. Thank God, Peter dear, I know how much you love me, or my pride would have been hurt beyond recovery. If I didn't know that it was your love that had been triumphant, I should have been wounded to the death. Probably out of pique I should have rushed violently into the waiting arms of my newest admirer. But I haven't done so.

"At the present moment I am trying again to see things from your point of view. It's difficult. I can't, because I am not you, and because I'm not married to a person who has given me a just cause for divorce. You don't believe in divorce—at least, from Josie Brant. I do—at least, from Josie Brant. At the beginning I was so sure that everything was right, that love like yours and mine was worth any sacrifice, that just being with you and loving you was enough. But that sort of thing couldn't go on. I realize it now. I suppose I'm too material and too selfish.

"Of one thing I'm sure. You're right at least in that. We mustn't see each other for a long time—six months. At the end of that time I'll tell you whether I agree to be given up or not. For the present, I'm just your devoted, if somewhat lacerated

"Tommy."

PETER read this letter a number of times.

It was so like her in every respect that it was almost the same as having her in the studio beside him. There was something rather splendid in the persistence of her devotion after what had happened. The letter made him happy though he knew that the time-limit she had put upon her endurance might only be a way of declaring, at last, her independence. There was but one reply—to write her fully of his visit to Josie and of the desperate plight in which he had found her.

"I can't desert her now, Tommy," he wrote in a final fury of earnestness. "She's already broken with sickness and dissipation, a mere shadow. Drugging herself too! There's no helping her, of course, because she's reckless, indifferent to what happens to her. Perhaps you can't understand why I feel my responsibility for all this. But it's very poignant to me. I could have kept her decent if I hadn't lost my money. I didn't marry her under false pretenses, but she was the victim of promises I couldn't keep. That was all my fault. It was also my fault that I couldn't provide for her. I could have saved her even then if I hadn't driven her from the house by my brutality. These things may seem little to you in view of my previous excellent intentions, but to me they are very real measures of my obligation. These are the things that have made my responsibilities to Josie greater than in a marriage under different—under more conventional conditions. Try to understand this. I'd give my life for you, Tommy, but what you ask isn't mine to give."

It was the end of a chapter. Peter went about his work in a fury of creation that led to self-forgetfulness. Tommy, in a spirit of resignation to the inevitable, took up Jimmy Blake, the theaters and late suppers and dances, trying to find in the old haunts and the old companions a recurrence of the old thrills of excitement. These failing her, she accepted the attentions of Mr. Waite, who invited persons of social prominence to meet her. And in this atmosphere, which was slightly "highbrow" and stodgy, Tommy behaved with great credit.

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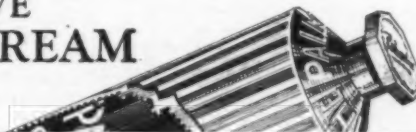
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SILK VELVET

(Continued from page 67)

delicate face, with eyes that drooped a little and a chin held high, as if that weight of hair at the neck pulled it back. She had wealth and beauty and a kind of frosted charm, and these things were not at all unpleasant to Mr. Appleby.

"You are looking very well, Mrs. Leland. You are resting this winter."

"I do not need to rest."

He hinted delicately at the strain she had been under.

"I hope I shall see more of you. Now and then, if I may come to call, it would make me very happy. Your mother and I are becoming fast friends. We do a little business together now and then. I hope we too, Mrs. Leland, will be great friends."

She knew this soft approach, this padded and respectable way of making love. As well as if it had already happened, she saw Mr. Appleby making up his mind to marry her.

"I'd like to show you some of my collections some day. I must give a party. I've picked up things here and there. You like travel?"

"I have traveled a good deal," said Judith simply.

She saw Mr. Appleby picking his way across continents, collecting. What did he collect, she wondered vaguely. Travel! Yes, she had traveled—she and Kirk. Wild days, unhappy days in countries where she did not know the language; miserable, tragic, brutal hours—strange hotels—Kirk in those glorious first months before he had begun to wear through his passion for her. Her cheeks flamed feverishly, and Mr. Appleby admiringly thought that he must be getting on well with this desirable lady.

He held her slim white hand in his plump one and laid his other over it. It was an inoffensive caress, but she held her chin higher even while she hesitated to draw away for fear of exaggerating his gesture.

"Good night," he said at last; "we need not say good-by. I am sure it is only au revoir, Mrs. Leland."

WITH him gone, the house was so still that Judith almost wished him back again. She told herself for the hundredth time that she must develop interests, must shake off these lurking, unadmitted thoughts and find something that would engage her mind.

There was nothing to do but to go to bed. She ought to be thankful that she could go peacefully to bed instead of waiting up to see when Kirk would come in, if indeed he came at all. He had been outrageous, she thought for the millionth time; and treading on the heels of that thought came the wonder why she hadn't managed to hold him more successfully. When they were first married, he had cared. More than that, he had been happy during all those months, happy as a boy, full of plans and even dreams. Kirk had dreamed grandly.

She pressed the button in her wall, and the soft-shaded lamps lit her room. On the dressing-table bench lay a long thin package wrapped in paper. That would be the material she had bought for Miss Haines to make up—the crêpe and the wasteful velvet. She unwrapped the package indolently and thrust the paper into the wastebasket. The roll of velvet was wrapped in white tissue. Judith unrolled it and the fabric tempted her again with its suggestion of beauty. She stepped out of her dark dinner dress and wrapped the velvet around her. Its luster gave her skin its full tribute. It was as fine as the velvet. She fancied herself in evening dress, and found a band of silver ribbon in her dressing-table which she tied about her hair.

As she posed, Mr. Appleby dropped out of her mind—and Cousin Grace—and her mother. She was in evening dress and at a ball where Kirk saw her, and she looked at him coldly and proudly. He had said that she was prudish and provincial, that she had no freedom of mind. He had told her that she didn't know how to dress, and she had become the more determined that he should appreciate the reserves of a lady, a lady of tailored suits and plain gowns, an unrouged, unpowdered lady. She had tried by her virtue, her rectitude, to force him to admit her points. Well, he had admitted them in the divorce-court.

She needed no rouge now. The color was back in her cheeks as she thought of these things. She pulled the velvet into a bodice; the silver band in her hair enchanted her. Then suddenly she tore off the ribbon, and the folds of velvet slid to the floor. Sinking on the bench, she dropped her head on her arms and wept.

MR. APPLEBY pursued the acquaintance.

He was to be seen frequently ascending the dignified steps of Mrs. Jarvis' home. He brought Judith books now and then, good, well-reviewed, acceptable books which were not too much in the new school of freedom. He took her riding in his well-appointed car, and they drove carefully, for he, like her mother, was cautious. Mrs. Jarvis was clearly cognizant of what was going on, and had no doubt of his intentions.

"Mr. Appleby is one of the finest men I have ever known," she told Judith.

Judith smiled, her weary, half-caustic smile.

She was trying during these days to occupy her mind, trying harder than ever, as if she felt that she might have to present an alibi to Mr. Appleby if she were to refuse any of his attentions. Yet in a way she was grateful for that attention. He kept her from sinking into that dreadful rank of "unwanted women." Some one, appreciating that she had "so much time," had urged her to go on the committee of the new home for working-girls, and she had done so. There she had crossed Kirk's trail again. It was Kirk's property which was wanted for the site of the new home, and it was Kirk who had, in the end, suddenly given it to the committee even as they prepared to buy it. The committee was astir with the news. It had come through Kirk's lawyer, for Kirk was still abroad—in Paris, people said, in Paris doing nothing but hunting amusement, Judith supposed. When, at a committee meeting, the announcement was made, the members glanced at Judith or deliberately did not glance at her, and she had by sheer force of will kept her expression the same. The others found the situation most interesting, and went out whispering one to another the details of the divorce of Kirk and his wife, and exaggerating with interest the conduct by which he had forced Judith to make the break. Judith had gone home alone from that meeting, sitting very straight in her limousine, hating Kirk as she had hated him before, because he would not be completely and properly vicious and was constantly flinging confusion into her opinion of him by such acts as this last.

Once she wondered whether, if she were still Kirk's wife, she would not have protested the gift a little, or perhaps conditioned it. It was a very expensive site. She became rather self-conscious on the board of directors. When Kirk's name was mentioned, she could imagine them saying, each to the other, thinking always of her: "How could she expect to hold him?"

Miss Haines was making up the blue crêpe.

It was a formal afternoon dress which would do as well for evening. Around its neck was a collar of lace. It was accurately fashionable without being smart. Judith had not shown her the velvet. She heard some women talking of the new man dressmaker who had given the city such a thrill of excitement with his appointments and his dictatorial remarks on clothes. The thought of him and of the ivory velvet simmered in her mind, and one day she found herself in his anteroom with her material on her lap, waiting.

When he looked at the velvet, he smiled and then looked again at Judith's high head, and her cheeks where the natural color was heightened.

"You choose very well. You know your style."

When the gown was finished and sent to her home, she hung it away without trying it on, thoroughly ashamed of it. But she knew how it looked, and sometimes the waste of it bothered her, hanging so lonesomely in her wardrobe, straight and plain, with its silvered ornament at the hip and its lovely shaped low bodice. From the moment it hung there, all her other evening clothes, the pink satin with beads, the black lace with three flounces, became absurd. She knew now why Kirk had screwed up his eyes when he looked at her in them. She knew now why he had been so attentive to Ellen DeForest.

THE first snow had been followed by others until the ground was thickly covered. Judith had been filling empty days. She had taken an extension course at the university and learned something about psychology and something more about economics. She was still on the board of the working-girls' home, and that institution was now well under way. She had joined two musical clubs and one woman's club and attended recitals and lectures. She crowded her days with virtuous appointments, yet the days remained saggingly empty. For all she did, nothing seemed really to absorb her. Her mother talked brightly of her new interest in things, and Mr. Appleby complained that she had hardly any time for him now. Yet it seemed to Judith sometimes as if she walked in a vacuum.

At Christmas, Mr. Appleby sent her roses and a magnificent sandalwood workbox. He came around later to receive his thanks, and they spent the afternoon together. He was near a proposal that day, and Judith avoided it. She hardly knew why she staved it off, for she had come to know that he was kind and good and protective, and that he would doubtless, as her mother had said, always be "good to his family." It would be a less empty life if she married him, and it would drive away the ghosts of the other years.

In February, Mrs. Jarvis always went to Virginia Hot Springs for a month. She liked the hotel, and she liked looking on at gayety without participating in it. It was her annual debauch, and she suggested of course that Judith accompany her. It was this which brought Mr. Appleby's suit to a head, for he did not want Judith out of his reach.

One early February afternoon in the Jarvis drawing-room he asked her to marry him. He was explicit and definite about himself.

"I am not a young man," he said. "I have passed the age when I can change my habits greatly. I know that our tastes agree, Judith, and so I think we could be happy together."

"How old are you?" asked Judith somewhat crudely.

"Forty-eight," said Mr. Appleby with a slight grimace.

Kirk was forty now. He didn't think himself old. He never intended to be old, he had so often declared.

"We have the same tastes," Mr. Appleby



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An invitation at the wrong time

The shadows of past experience flashed through her mind. She knew she'd feel tired out, uncomfortable, draggy. But—what was it Grace had said? "It's your own fault if you let your old-fogey notions interfere with your own comfort! Nobody else does." Well, she'd try it, this once. So she accepted!

Women who keep physically fit have learned that a rub-down with Mifflin Alkohol solves the problem of those times when bathing is inconvenient or otherwise impracticable. Simply moisten a sponge or washcloth with Mifflin Alkohol and rub it over the body.

It is refreshing and invigorating. It removes body odors—especially odors of perspiration. It leaves the skin cool and smooth.

Mifflin Alkohol also relieves tired, aching feet; it is splendid for sprains or muscle-strains; it is an efficient antiseptic for cuts and scratches. Cools you instantly on the hottest days or nights.

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continued. "I am sure that with your love of dignity and peace I could make you happy."

"It's hard to make me happy," countered Judith.

He looked at her with amusement. There was no ripple on the surface of Judith's calm.

"None the less, I think I could manage it," said Mr. Appleby with some jocoseness. "I'd like to make up for what has been unhappy in your past—make you forget it."

"I shall never forget it."

"In time I think you will. You feel otherwise now because you are so close to it."

"I feel that way because I cherish it," said Judith suddenly, "—because, miserable as I was, unhappy as I was, I loved my husband."

He approached her and took her hand in his.

"Was it love?" he questioned with gentle didacticism. "Was it love? Don't you think perhaps there's a finer kind than you had, Judith?"

"Maybe."

"Let me show you a man's true devotion," he urged.

But Judith only said that she would think it over. She didn't quite let go of Mr. Appleby, because there was something in his kindness and his decency that did help to fill up those empty days. There were times when he seemed quite warm and expansive. And he was safe. He would never run away. One could not imagine Mr. Appleby with a wandering eye, Mr. Appleby restlessly interested in beauty if it was embodied in a woman not his own wife. He could be trusted, and he never would be cruel.

"You are very pretty tonight," said Mr. Appleby with a hint of amorousness.

Judith was wearing one of the dark dresses with the lace at the throat, the good and proper ones for a divorced woman who had suffered.

"I like that dress," he went on.

"I've others that I look better in." She thought of the ivory velvet. If she married Mr. Appleby, she could wear that.

"Anything you wear would be beautiful to me," he said resoundingly. "Your taste is perfect."

She felt no uplift at the praise—rather, a faint boredom. But she could not tell him either yes or no, in spite of his urging. She asked for time, and in that he saw the result of her recent "strain" and a natural reluctance to enter upon marriage again. Mrs. Jarvis felt the same way about it, being very conscious of what was going on. She was very kind to Judith and insisted that she go to Hot Springs with her.

They arrived there at night, and it was next morning that Mrs. Jarvis felt the first tortures of an ulcerating tooth which by evening confined her dinnerless and miserable to her bedroom. Judith tried to make her mother comfortable, and when the old lady was well surrounded by hot-water bottles, Judith stole away into her own room to order dinner served there for herself. It was very quiet, for they had chosen rooms where they could not hear the sounds from below. Judith looked restlessly about her, but even then she did not consider going down to the public rooms alone. It was at this point that her eye fell on her opened trunks and on a shimmer of ivory velvet. Instantly something within her asked: "Why not?"

HIGH COUNTRY

It's the Rocky Mountain country that lures so many Americans from apartment and office in the summer-time. Another story of it will be told you in an early issue, by—
COURTNEY RYLEY COOPER

The head-waiter showed the beautiful newcomer in the velvet dinner dress to a conspicuous table. He recognized quality when he saw it, and hovered around her. It was a completely new experience to Judith to have men turn their heads as she passed. Her head was as high as usual, and she was serene. Everything about her was right, and she knew it. The long silky scarlet scarf which she carried she had bought one day and hidden away. Her hair was not displayed to the best advantage, or so her mother would have thought. She had tightened it and tucked it away until it looked like a thick bobbed shock, and around it she had put a narrow silver ribbon. But it was not the ribbon or the scarf or even the ivory velvet: it was a sensation that came into Judith's consciousness, a feeling of belonging to a scene and dominating it, of being consciously beautiful and of feeling kindly toward everyone who admired her. She had ordered dinner and meant to enjoy it in confidence—

Then she saw him—not so far away, with a party of six, whom she did not know. He was sitting rather stiffly, and she knew in that quick single glance that not only was it Kirk but that Kirk was not feeling agreeable. She read accurately that slight curve of his lip, the double wrinkles in his forehead from which his black hair waved back as gallantly as ever. He was immaculately dressed, but so tired-looking, and certainly ill-tempered, thought Judith.

She shifted her chair a little so her face was hidden. For she meant, in her new confidence, to enjoy this episode. It didn't overcome her or daunt her.

She had a sudden determination to bring him to acknowledge her charm, her beauty. But how to manage it she did not know. The dinner passed. In the lounge outside, people were talking in groups, having coffee at small tables, reading, writing. Judith draped her scarf carelessly about her shoulders, seated herself beside a pillar and waited. A mirror across the room told her how lovely she was, as she half concentrated on the book she had bought at the news-stand.

KIRK passed her, alone. She lowered her eyes and guessed that he did not even glance down as he went by. But she had a glimpse of his face. It was leaner than it used to be, and at closer range it did not seem so much vicious as miserable. He was in trouble, thought Judith, trouble about some woman! Her blood quickened. In a year she had not had this sense of being alive, this thrill of interest.

Kirk had not rejoined his party. She saw the others leave the hotel, swathed in motor-coats. He sat in a corner of the lounge, smoking in short, angry puffs. Judith watched him, and other men about her watched Judith, and one or two tried to gain her notice. But absorbed as she was in watching the wretchedness of Kirk, and wondering what was up now, she did not see them. A hundred memories and pities rushed through her mind. He seemed so close over there, and so natural, as if at any moment he might come over to her, full of familiar irritation or perhaps with some wild, gay proposal. She gazed too intently, too forgetfully, for it must have been that which made Kirk twist his head quickly to see who was regarding him. Before she had time to lower her eyes, she had caught his amazed recognition and the white, puzzled look that went with it. Instantly she forgot her dress, her confidence, her assumed manner. Shrinking back into herself, she rose and went hurriedly to the elevator, grateful for the gilt gates that clanged even as Kirk started from his chair.

In her own room, with the door shut, she could hear her mother's faint snore. Everything that had happened below seemed like a dream. This was what her life was,

this safe retreat. The mirror gave back her image and seemed to say that it was a strange retreat for one so beautiful. Kirk might telephone the room. He would, perhaps. He might, at least. But a half-hour passed, and the telephone remained silent. She thought then it was more probable that he had left the hotel, in disgust at having run into her, to keep his rendezvous with the inevitable lady who had been the cause of the scowl. For another half-hour she sat there, hoping unadmittedly for the telephone. It did not ring, and gradually she knew that it would not, that she might sit and sit there, until her youth vanished—sit there forever. She opened the vanity-case, Kirk's gift, and rouged her delicate cheeks. She would go down again and interest some one, anyone. She would do something!

Careful, lest she wake her mother, she pulled the light low and opened her door into the hall, with only cold desperation and secret hope that below she would see Kirk again and show him that she didn't care. Then she drew in her breath with a gasp, for there, leaning against the wall, opposite her door, was Kirk.

"Judith!" was all he said.

She could not answer. She closed the door behind her, as if to deny him entrance, but with her heart trembling in her throat.

"Here's the bad penny," he said.

THERE was the same old shamed, amused, almost philosophic look in his eyes. Judith knew that twitch of his lips as he seemed to laugh at his weakness and accept it.

"I didn't quite have the courage to knock," he ventured; "but you gave me such a scant look at you downstairs. And I've been hungry for one. You look as if it agreed with you to be rid of me, Judith. I suppose perhaps it should."

Words trembled on her tongue—words describing her loneliness and pain, her wretchedness through empty months. They sought to form themselves into a flood of accusation and anger. Then her hand touched the soft depth of her velvet skirt and something reminded her that, though he had been drawn back to her, it would be only charm and loveliness that would keep him. Argument never could.

"It's a rotten empty world, Judith. I threw away the only thing I really wanted in it. Is it any satisfaction to you to know that?"

"No," she answered, and wondered; for it had been just such an admission that she had tried to force from him before.

"How serene you are," he said, "like the peace of the world—and so beautiful! I'd truly forgotten how beautiful you are."

He had forgotten the pink-satin dress, thought Judith. Still she did not speak.

"Will you come downstairs and talk to me?" he asked.

"What about?" asked Judith.

"I hadn't gone quite that far in my own mind. It would be about myself, I suppose, and of the things you know. All the things I've said before. Apologies, perhaps—hopes. Judith, how I'd like to come back to you—how I would have come back to you months ago, if I'd had any confidence that I wouldn't smash your faith all over again, tread upon your lovely little planted rows of rules and moralities! I'd try not to step on them. But I can't be sure, so I can't ask you to be sure. You can't love without those sureties, those promises and all those if's. But people do love sometimes, whether they have any right to or not. As I loved your sweet, accusing Puritan face following me all over the world and telling me what a brute I'd been! I didn't mind the accusations. They were true enough. But I wanted to comfort you. And most of all I wanted to see you. Now I've the idea you don't need comfort—or want to see me."



The sweetest story ever whispered

"EVEN the leading lady would be jealous of your beauty, dear," he whispered close to her pretty ear.

It was her hour of triumph. The "ugly duckling" had become the rarely beautiful swan.

She was contrasting this happy moment with the time before she had learned from Madame Jeannette the secret of youthful color by the use of Pompeian Bloom.

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His eyes rested on the scarlet scarf splashed against the depths of ivory velvet.

Judith looked at her husband's face, with its tired lines of mockery, its bitter, humorous mouth and the eyes that were so eager and miserable. And suddenly she was tired of all this discipline of her love, all the badgering of it and demanding and standing on its rights. And then she smiled.

"Kirk—Kirk!" was all she said; and the tremble in his voice as he held her in his arms and told her all the tender things she had starved to hear, was answer complete.

"You're more beautiful than ever," he

said, releasing her for further admiration. "There isn't any other man, is there?"

That was Kirk. Confidence had already leaped back into his face along with happiness. How quickly he doffed his cap of worry to don the more becoming plume of triumph! Judith thought of Mr. Appleby. That affectionate and respectable gentleman might have his uses.

"There is a man," she admitted, "who wants to marry me."

"There's more than one," said Kirk jealously, "but I'm the only one who's going to get what he wants."

BITTER APPLES

(Continued from page 45)

dividing wall of brick, covered with stout vines now winter-bare. Wyncote saw some one trying to scale this wall. He rushed forward angrily, to receive with stunning force a boot-heel squarely in the forehead.

Chapter Three

WYNCOTE staggered back a few steps, hurt, dazed and half-blinded; but almost at once he became furious with fighting passion, and started forward again. He was too late, however; his mysterious assailant had slipped over the wall. Wyncote waited until his vision cleared, then returned to the house. The heel had fortunately been covered with rubber, so the blow, stunning as it was, would have no real after-effect. The spot would turn red and possibly swell; but as he knew all the first aids to football bruises, he was not worried.

In fact, he got much satisfaction out of the adventure. He *had* been watched; his imagination had not played him tricks. The thing now was to find out why. Was there something in the house of which he knew nothing? Second thought dismissed this supposition. Several times during the past two weeks the house had been empty from nine till twelve, giving plenty of opportunities for the ransacking of the place. Perhaps the solution lay in his father's letter. But he was determined not to read it till he went to bed.

By the time he was dressed for dinner, there remained only a slight red mark on his forehead and no discomfort.

Beside his plate he saw a pasteboard box such as might have contained shoes.

"What's that, William?"

"I don't know, sir," said the butler. "It came this afternoon while you were out."

"Who brought it?"

"A messenger boy."

"From what service?"

"I couldn't say, sir. He wore no uniform. He said it was important. You did not notice it in the hall, sir, so I brought it in here."

"All right."

Wyncote proceeded to dine, not at all conscious of the taste of food. He appeared to be nonchalant, but actually he was imagining all sorts of things. The recent scrimmage in the garden gave this strange box sinister portents. Should he call in the police or risk opening the box himself? All at once he found that life was endurable and that all he needed was a change of scene, and that it would be folly to go up through the ceiling merely to satisfy a burning curiosity. Presently the proper method of treatment came to him. So after the meal was done, he carefully took up the box, which he found was light, and carried it into the garden. Here he deliberately flung it toward the brick wall and waited for the detonation. None came.

He laughed. The whole business was evidently getting into his knee-joints. He searched about the flower-bed and recovered

the box, which was still intact. Thrusting it under his arm, he marched back to the library. He cut the strings binding the box and gently removed the cover. Cotton-wool. This he took out piece by piece till he came upon a bent menu-card. He knew the restaurant, but had not been there for months. He lifted the card and discovered the true contents. He laughed, this time sardonically. Some one was trying to scare him. For what he saw was a stiletto, partly rusted. The handle was bound in leather, considerably discolored by the sweat of hands.

Silly stuff. Of course, it got to him in a sense. He was human. But for all that, it was stupid and smacked of an uninventive mind. Suddenly the truth came. He was being subjected to black-hand demonstrations. Strange faces at the window and rusty stilletos in shoe-boxes. A little later he would receive a note demanding money. To set fear in him first, to card his moral fiber as they carded wool! Well, it wasn't going to be done.

Here was a real diversion. For a few days he would have a new interest in life. First-off, he would go to the restaurant tonight. If there was a trap, he would walk into it and look around. And if the episode took a serious trend, he would bolt for *The Four Winds*, lately *The Petrel*.

HE put on his hat and coat and left the house. It was three blocks to the subway, but he went the distance without the least fear. So long as they had not presented their demands, he would be perfectly safe on the streets. He had inherited millions, and they had discovered the fact; but what they were going to discover was that he had given these millions away and that he was not going to be intimidated.

He wandered up and down Broadway till eleven o'clock. He was frankly in love with night in this locality. The millions of winking colored lights, the weaving streams of human beings, the bright shop-windows, the theater entrances, the handsomely gowned women; his delight in these things was abiding.

He had an adventure. He was comely, with a fine muscular body, and in normal times a merry roving eye. A young woman accosted him.

"Hello, boy!"

"Hello, girl!"

"Lonesome?"

She was pretty, but over this prettiness was the mask of defiant boldness. Wyncote knew the type. His hand went into his pocket and out.

"If I give you ten, will you beat it?"

"I'll tell the world!"

"Take this and toddle home, then."

"You won't come along?" Where there was one ten, there were generally a dozen.

"No. On your way."

The girl shrugged and continued on down the street. Without gratitude, he knew; and she wouldn't go home till she had found a victim. But her clothes looked so thin!

No, not this sort of amusement. He had

that day given up what, if he lived till fifty, would be the equivalent of three millions, in order to keep his self-respect. He was not minded to toss this self-respect into the gutter so shortly after he had reclaimed it.

He had not taken three steps when a policeman stopped him.

"What did you give her?"

"Ten to keep off the street tonight. You know her?"

"A pretty slick little grafter, but she's slipping. I've told her to keep off Broadway, and one o' these nights I'll have to run her in. You don't look like a hick."

Wyncote laughed. "You never can tell. She looked cold. Have a cigar?"

"Sure."

And they parted, somewhat admiring each other. Generosity and forbearance are always admirable qualities.

Wyncote now proceeded to the restaurant, which was a fashionable place and known as a cabaret. It was filling with people who had been to the theaters, and he had some difficulty in getting a single table. But that which subdued street-girls also subdued head-waiters.

He was given a small table at one corner of the dancing floor. He looked about, making it a point to study the waiters. For his garden stiletto man might be a waiter or a bus-boy or a cook in the kitchen. He was going to have some fun.

The lights dropped to a glow, and the spotlight from the balcony flung a round white moon upon the dancing floor. Across the path of this fallen moon tobacco smoke swirled. A Harlequin and his Columbine appeared magically and danced beautifully.

Lights again, and dancing by the guests; this too amused Wyncote. The fat and lean, the tall and short, in terpsichorean ecstasy! He turned to his supper. He was pouring his coffee, when again the lights were dimmed and the smoky moonbeam shot down. A hush followed.

Now in the circle appeared a violinist, then a girl dressed in simple white, a Dolly Varden hat on her velvet black hair. She began to sing, old melodies that return generation after generation. Her voice was like muffled bells.

Wyncote drew in his breath. She was the girl of the lemon verbena!

Chapter Four

THE head-waiter knocked lightly upon the dressing-room door. It was all the same to him whether his errand failed or not; he was ten dollars the richer.

"What is wanted?"

"It is Henri," he said. "A young gentleman wishes to meet you."

"I never meet anyone. You know that," came through the door.

"But this young man says he has met you. I'll put his card under the door."

Silence. Henri shoved the card across the doorsill and waited indifferently.

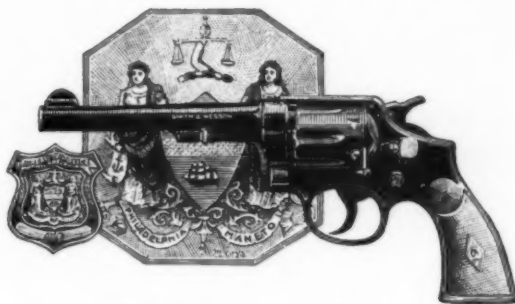
Presently the voice said: "Tell him I shall come as soon as I'm dressed."

"Yes, miss."

Henri stared at the door, puzzled. So the little prude was going to break her rule? The young man did not know her; his method of approach was as familiar to Henri as the sky. He knew all the signs. Well, it was her business. Henri would have been profoundly astonished could he have seen the young woman's face at that moment.

A savage ecstasy marred the beauty of it. She was but partly dressed. Round her neck ran a silken cord attached to the end of which was a silken pouch. She lifted this pouch to her lips and kissed it. Then she took Wyncote's card and slowly crushed it against her palm. As, later, she would crush his heart!

He had come! He had walked straight



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into the trap. He had seen her face that afternoon and had remembered it. She had shot blindly, never dreaming of such success. The stiletto and the menu-card had brought him here, suspiciously. He would leave the restaurant, remembering only Belinda White. She had long known that any meeting which appeared trickish would not serve, for he was metropolitan bred; and a recognizable trick would have created in his mind suspicion or something infinitely worse. Well, here he was, in a romantic mood, in the Broadway sense. She had every confidence in her beauty and her mental gifts. The silly campaign could be dropped; she had achieved her ends.

It was going to be difficult, however. She must give careful consideration to every angle. If she went too far, she would appeal only to his senses; if she did not go far enough, she would miss his heart. Much depended upon this first encounter, the manner in which he accepted it.

She was conscious of mild bewilderment—the affair had been accomplished so easily. She ran over her program of action. Tonight she would maintain an attitude of aloofness, pretend that she had been mistaken in the name, had read Wyncote instead of Wyncote; yet, having met him, she would condescend to sit at his table for a minute or two. Make her friendship possible but obstructed.

WHEN she appeared, Wyncote rose with alacrity and some astonishment. His request had been a wish; he hadn't expected its fulfillment.

"Why!" she said. "You are not Mr. Wyncote!"

"Wyncote."

"Well!"—undecidedly. "My mistake."

"Won't you be good enough to overlook the mistake?"

"Sometimes I forget names, but never faces. I do not know you. You thought I was some one you knew?"

"No. Your choice of music struck rather deep. My mother used to sing those songs when I was a little boy."

"Ah!" Reluctantly she sat down, rather conspicuous for her black hat and dress amid the colorful theater gowns. "Does she sing them still?"

"She is dead."

"Oh!" So much the better. There would be no woman in the background to suffer.

"Will you have some supper?"

"Supper? I never eat at night." Break bread and salt with him? She could have laughed in his face. Instead, she smiled into it. "Thank you just the same."

"Your voice is lovely. It has been well trained."

"How do you know?"

"I am fond of music, and have studied a little."

"What do you play?"

"The piano."

"Like this?" Rather insolently she indicated her meaning by tapping the table with an index finger.

He laughed. "Pretty close to it."

He was delighted. He knew all the Broadway types. Here was a girl who had received proper training and education—perhaps she had birth, too. Singing in a fashionable restaurant was nowadays no disgrace. Trying for the opera, and making bread and butter this way. Her eyes were glorious.

"You are on the stage?" he ventured.

"Not at present."

"What is your name?"

"Very ordinary."

"What?"

"Belinda White."

"Belinda." It was a tonal caress.

"White." It was a curt reminder that he was not at liberty to use her given name.

"I was only sounding it. An old name, but rarely used these days. I beg your pardon."

"I forgive you."

"You speak English perfectly."

"Why not? I am an American."

"But you look foreign."

She offered a shrug. A pause followed.

"Lotus and love," he said.

"What did you say?" The gray eyes flashed ominously.

"Pardon me again. I was thinking out loud. I read a poem today, from the Chinese, and it keeps running through my head."

"Recite it!"—to learn if he were lying. He recited the particular stanza; and when he had done, she repeated one line thoughtfully: "And the innocent shall eat of bitter apples."

"Kings true, doesn't it?"

"How should you know? You, with nothing to do but to dine in restaurants and bother the poor girls who make their bread and butter dancing or singing."

"Perhaps I came here tonight, where it is pleasant and bright, to leave behind a shadow."

"What is the attraction about us?" she demanded.

"You are never humdrum."

"Ah!"

"Good or bad, but never humdrum."

"And which do you think I am?"

"Good."

"What tells you I am good?"

"Instinct; that is the only explanation a man has."

"You expect me?"

"No. I was much astonished to see you."

His air was respectful. But how long would it be so, she questioned. They were all respectful at first.

"I am tired," she said. "Will you excuse me?"

"Tomorrow night—may I see you again?"

"If you come at this time, it will be inescapable."

"You mean, that my method of approach has been objectionable?"

"Oh, I don't suppose you're any worse than the rest of them. I have broken my rule, and possibly I may break it again tomorrow night. I don't say I will and I don't say I won't. Good night." And she left him.

Left him with such elation as he had never known before! Now that she was gone, his mind scintillated with brilliant epigrams. She was totally different from any other girl he had met. There was no boldness in her self-reliance; she could take care of herself, and she knew it. She had got the names mixed. Well, he would show her that he wasn't a cad. Lemon verbena. He had meant to compliment her about that. She was straight; he could not explain it definitely, but he knew it.

He paid his reckoning, the official one, and went forth into the street—and picked up his shadow. What would she say when she learned that he was Oliver Wyncote's son?

Belinda White ate her supper in a dairy-lunch, and thought less of the adventure than of a line in the Chinese poem, which passed and repassed through her mind: "And the innocent shall eat of bitter apples."

Chapter Five

AN hour later Wyncote sat in his bedroom chair, his head bent, his body supine. Upon the floor lay his father's letter. Perhaps ten minutes passed. Then he struck the tears from his eyes, recovered the letter, and reread it for fear he might have missed something.

"My son—In order to read this letter, you will have done what I hoped you would do: surrendered your rights in the ill-gotten fortune I left. Remember, as you read this, that God mixes some peculiar mud with the clay out of which He fashions us.

"Conscience did not pursue me through life. She energized no qualms in me till the hour came when I could not undo what I had done. I looked upon my deeds with a sportsman's bravado, as a game, a source of amusement and profit. That I had strewn my pathway with human wrecks never touched me till Conscience did. And what awoke her? You. My punishment began when I was astounded to learn that I loved my son as I had never loved any other thing on earth; and I could not tell you so, for the bright honesty of your look! I could not tell you that I loved you, because I saw the end approaching, when my secret life would be laid bare to public gaze. Thus I have at least saved you the greatest hurt. You might have returned this love, and then found me out. So I held myself aloof.

"I offer no excuses for my conduct except that I was born with a crooked streak. Too much mud in my cosmos. The tragic jest is that my love for you ruined me. With my thoughts upon you, I lost my cunning; I stumbled and blundered. They are closing in on me. They say that the sins of the father shall fall upon the son. It depends upon you whether mine shall fall upon you or not. You are strong mentally and physically. Leave New York and go elsewhere, and the stigma will not follow you. Trust Thornden; go to him whenever you are in doubt.

"I feel that my spirit will not meet your mother's. It is best so. For I betrayed that loving soul by thought and deed. As I betrayed my friend Thornden! I robbed him of his promised bride. But he has forgiven me. I know, too, that your mother has forgiven me. Will you, my son?

"Do not destroy this letter. Make it a kind of buckler against the me that is in you. Whenever you permit a doubtful action to enter your thoughts, reread what I have written. Perhaps I shall then be able to do in death what I failed to do in life—guard you. God bless you, my son, and farewell.

"Your Father."

Lovable and whimsical, thought the son; full of good and evil, leashing the one and letting the other run wild with him. Not true even to himself; but lovable and whimsical. Forgiven by the man whose sweet-heart he had lured away. There would be other women, too; and they had loved him. Lovable and whimsical. Other women. What had become of them? Never to know who they were, but who would know him, chanced they to meet. The son forgave. He would always keep the letter.

Wynote began to review his deed of this day, and saw it in a true light. False pride, stiff with resentment; not the ennobling pride the gesture of which is sacrifice. How much mud was there in his clay?

He mulled over the letter while he undressed; but when his cheek touched the pillow, his thought flew to Belinda White. Youth is youth.

ON the morrow he was ready to dismiss the notion of sailing on *The Four Winds*. New York held something infinitely attractive. The women of his own world were now walled in, a wall of snubs and cuts. He was of no mind to submit. Here was a new world, the fringe of which he had touched occasionally, a world in which women had to be attractive to exist, mentally as well as physically. Those who were adroit enough to circle the pitfalls of night life became the best of comrades. They understood man, his restlessness, his instability, his flights and his falls, and knew how to adapt themselves. Belinda White would be one of these. Men naturally sought her kind, because the sources of amusement and mystery were never permitted to dry up. They knew how to measure out their love,



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"Make the hair lustrous," she said deliberately, "that is the birth of charm."

"But," I protested, "few women can have such wonderfully lustrous hair!"

"You are mistaken. All women can have it and the charm it gives. In every woman's hair is a wealth of lustre she has never dreamed of."

"And the secret of bringing it out—"

"Simply—a touch of henna in the shampoo. Ah, you do not know henna. Crudely used, it is not without its drawbacks. Artfully used, it is magic—so swiftly does it reveal the brilliance in a woman's hair."

"But, is there no change—?"

"None, save a change to greater

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to give a man a taste of nectar when he was really thirsty, not to empty the cup at once and surfeit him.

He was only twenty-four.

As for the black-hand stuff, he wasn't going to let that worry him. If it came to threats, he would simply clear out and find rooms in another part of the town. One could hide tolerably well in New York.

The day brought a deal of restlessness, it was so long. He called up Thornden and related his last night's adventure, the man in the garden and the rusted stiletto in the shoe-box. Thornden advised him to give the affair no attention till threatening notes began to come in. All he had to do then was to turn the affair over to the police. But Wyncote was determined to keep the police out of it. The police would simply bring out more publicity; and he had no stomach to turn a nine-days' wonder into eighteen.

THAT night at the cabaret he was covertly watched, but this time he was absolutely unaware of it. His prescience lay fallow. He was swimming in sun-spangled clouds of his own making.

Belinda was kind; she was even gay; and when he asked if he might be permitted to see her home and she consented, he immediately soared into one of those heavens known only to his age. But she did not surrender hastily.

"See me home? I am quite accustomed to going home alone. What good would it do? We live in different worlds." The tone was one of amiable banter.

"I shouldn't be agreeable company?"

"Oh, as for that, I don't say. But it is establishing a precedent; and other men might believe they had the same right as you."

"But perhaps I might be able to keep the others away."

"I live in a shabby quarter of the town. Alone."

"I'm all alone too."

"Well, then, tonight; but not tomorrow night. And if you talk nonsense, I'll leave you."

"I promise."

The subway car became the chariot of Phæbus. But he talked no nonsense, however much he thought. Books, art, music were his vocal subjects.

"Will you have tea with me tomorrow afternoon?" he asked as they came to her doorway.

"Tea—with you?" But before he was given time to sense the tragic bitterness that had escaped her, she retrieved her blunder.

"Where?"

"Any place you care to name."

She thought for a moment, then named a tea-room of a great dry-goods shop. A fit of petulant displeasure was his for a moment. He wanted her in a quiet place, all to himself; and he knew that the tea-room she had selected was noisy with chattering women, and that romance could not pry itself into such quarters with a shoe-spoon. He offered no protest, however; for he sensed that she sought amusement and protection at the same time.

"Four-thirty. Good night." He offered his hand.

But she adroitly escaped this contact by waving hers and running into the house. Once in her room, she furiously flung off her wraps and sat on the edge of the bed, rocking her body. The horror of it! She hated his smile, she hated his voice; she would go on hating him till the last breath went out of her. . . . Tea!

She was only twenty.

As for the object of this fury, he went home with his head full of pleasant tinsel, daydreams which never materialize, which are like Dobbin's projected carrot, visible but always beyond reach. But who cares? It is the business of youth to step blithely

from one dream to another. That they are eternally crumbling does not matter; the quarries are inexhaustible.

For five nights he was permitted to see Belinda home; and each night she revealed to him some corner of her mind, some pretty jewel of a corner: wit, humor, poetry, music, life. She had known luxury. She never said so; but now and then a word would fall, a phrase in thoughtless reminiscence. She had been to Florence, for she spoke of seeing a certain Carlo Dolci, which he knew to be in the Pitti Galleria. Thus, once upon a time she had known luxury. And in that state there would have been a thousand barriers between them. But never did he put any questions; what she wished him to know she would tell him.

He saw nothing unusual in the rapidity of the growth of this friendship. Girls singing in cabarets or on the stage were always meeting men casually and thinking nothing of it. Belinda was different; a mistake in a name had brought them together. Henri the head-waiter had assured him that he was the only man Belinda had spoken to off duty in the restaurant, that she was a little prude. And yet it was something like the manner in which the Follies girl, not so long ago, had consented to run about town with him. He had never felt ashamed of that episode till now—which more than anything else strengthened his respect for Belinda. Besides, they were both so lonely. But some day her voice would carry her back to the luxury she had once known; and it behooved him to go along with her in a literary way.

He began to dream seriously on his way home of nights. Belinda would sing in opera and he would write inspiring novels.

And why not? A man without a dream isn't worth a row of broken pots. Dreams are the bootstraps by which a man miraculously lifts himself from his real environment into the one of his hopes.

ALAS, for dreams! On the sixth morning he found his dreams in dusty rubble at his feet. In the mail he came upon a letter which first shocked, then infuriated him. It was unsigned, badly spelled, and notified him that on the twenty-ninth of the month, at ten o'clock at night, he was to appear alone at the junction of Fifth and Fifth Avenue with ten thousand dollars in bills of large denomination. If he failed to appear with the money, or if he warned the police, harm would immediately come to the young woman to whom he was at present showing his attentions. He would be given three warnings, no more.

There was no fear in him, only impotent rage; for he knew from newspaper reading that black-handers were trapped but once in a thousand times. He was equally sensible of the fact that they generally made good their threats. Some scoundrelly waiter in the cabaret was back of this, but there would be no way of proving it. He would have to warn Belinda what was toward, and she would vanish out of his ken. The irony of it! His friendship would cost her her job. He decided to consult Thornden. The old fellow would be sure to offer something sensible.

"My advice," said Thornden, "is for you to clear out. Take the trip on *The Petrel*. That will leave them high and dry."

"But what about Miss White?"—anxiously.

"Are you in love with her?"—bluntly.

"Lord, no! I made her acquaintance only a few nights ago. But I can't leave her high and dry. If I don't turn up, they may injure her, believing my interest in her is deeper than it really is. I like her; she's straight—better educated than I am. She's taken my mind off myself—kind of a tonic."

"You read your father's letter?"

"Yes. I am sorry for him, and forgive him as readily as you have."

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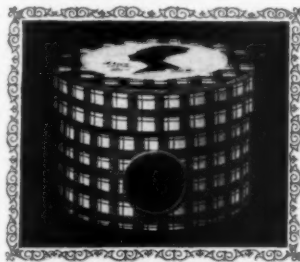
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Thornden nodded gravely. His thought was: this boy might have been his.

"What's four months out of your young life?" he said jocularly. "The young lady is substantial; she will not evaporate. Arrange with her to correspond; and I myself promise to keep in touch with her."

"But she will lose her job!"

"Is she pretty?"

"Yes!"—cautiously. "And she sings like a nightingale!"—less cautiously.

"Well, I'll find her something. I haven't any influence in that direction, but I have friends who have."

"But I'm filling your hands with my affairs!" protested Wyncote.

"My subordinates will handle the sale of the estate. How did you come to meet this girl?"

"I was so damned lonesome!"

Thornden laughed. This naïveté was too much for his gravity. At the same time it revealed the soul of the boy: clean, but restless.

"Go and buy the ticket I have reserved for you. I give you my word that the young lady will be found when you return. If you stay in New York, you may find it very unpleasant. You see, there's no way for you to communicate to the black-handers that your millions are gone and that the young lady is only a casual acquaintance. Even if she is only that, you'd never forgive yourself if anything happened to her."

"No. But, hang it, I'll be running away!"

"Discretion isn't cowardice. What do you gain by staying in the field? You spoke of being watched. You don't suppose, do you, that you can hide here in town successfully? If you were watched closely before you received this threatening letter, how much closer they will watch you now!"

TO get this boy on the boat! New faces—some of them young and feminine—and new scenes: he would soon forget both the tragedy and this pretty cabaret girl, who might or might not be straight. Perilously near his father's footsteps, without suspecting it. There was something sinister behind all these actions—he was certain of it; but astute lawyer that he was, he could not dig into it beyond a vague suspicion that it dealt with something the poor boy had inherited. To get him safely on that boat was now the main thing.

"All right," said Wyncote finally. "I'll take the old *Petrel*. I was always crazy about her."

"That's bully! And remember, you're John Carey. Don't you believe it would be better if I saw this young woman and explained the affair to her?"

Who could say that the girl wasn't in the background somewhere? An hour with her here might show light. But Wyncote demolished this possibility.

"No. I'm having tea with her this afternoon, and I'll take care of that."

"Does she know the other side of the story?"

"No. Why should I tell her that now? God knows, she'll find it out. Some one will recognize me and give her the tip."

"No false colors. Better tell her, rather than let her find it out that way. Add that you've given away the money."

"When the time comes."

"At least tell her to call after you've sailed."

"I'll do that."

"I'll give her the same courteous attention that I would give your sister, if you had one."

"Who knows?" Wyncote burst out. "Maybe I have one. No, no; I don't mean that! I'm not myself. My ordered life has been torn up by the roots. I find myself suddenly without friends."

"How do you know? Have you tried out any of them?"

"I dare not."

Poor lad! Thornden saw what easy prey he would be for the type he had so recently been drawn to. Well, once he was on the yacht, the curtain would fall upon this episode. The girl's face was beautiful enough; but what of her soul?

WYNCOTE told Belinda that afternoon about the letter, and that for her sake, rather than place her in any danger, he had decided to take a trip around the world. He would write occasionally. And when he returned, they could easily renew this pleasant friendship.

This information appalled Belinda. She wasn't worried about black-handers or over the possibility of losing her job; but if Oliver Wyncote's son was to sail around the world, he would become lost to her.

At once she summoned Joseph.

"Joseph, did you send him a black-hand letter?" she demanded to know.

"I dropped all that nonsense on your orders," Joseph spoke the patois of his island. "Well, he has received a threatening letter, demanding thousands!"—in the same tongue, but with Tuscan purity.

Joseph was thrilled. She had come home at last; she was Sicilian.

"None of us had anything to do with that letter."

"Speak English," she ordered.

He silently cursed the alien in her; it was always stepping in at the wrong moment.

"I am excited," he said apologetically.

"There is more to this. They have seen me with him and threaten to strike him through me! Do you understand? Through me!"

"What—strike at you? He will not pay the money to save you hurt?"

"No."

"Ah, then he is cowardly!" Joseph laughed with malice.

"He is going around the world to escape. While I must look for another job! Think of that—the irony of it!"

"I have learned that he was sailing."

"But he becomes lost to us!"—passionately.

"Patience!" Joseph smiled.

"You say patience?" she cried bitterly.

Joseph eyed her compassionately. He loved her and all she represented; but in this affair she was in the way, though he dared not tell her so. For himself, holding to tradition, a quick blow while the blood was hot. What was murder to her was but rough justice to Giuseppe Alcamo. He had almost hypnotized her into his way of thinking; but now he almost read failure with her: the American taint reasserted itself whenever there was a question of violence.

There was a small but pointed fear in him that if he truly showed his hand she would be likely to set the authorities upon him. She hated this later Wyncote, hated him with body and soul—never any doubt of that; but she would not have him injured physically. It was droll. Swift justice to her divided blood was horrible; yet she could plan to tear out the young man's heart a little at a time! There was Sicilian enough in her to excite her to torture, but not enough to kill.

There was another phase which disturbed him considerably. He, Giuseppe Alcamo, saw what she, the daughter of the Marchese di Montagna, did not see: that her subconscious purpose was to save the young man from death by violence. Very well; her good Joseph would appear to let her have her way. But when she was thousands of miles away from these shores, the cunning Stefani would see to it that the son of Oliver Wyncote would enter some foreign port and never more be seen. And who then could accuse Giuseppe Alcamo of having had a hand in it?

"Yes, patience," Joseph purred. "Lose him? Not necessarily."

She stepped back at the prospect thus revealed to her. "You mean that I—"

"You took a solemn oath in a solemn hour," Joseph reminded her. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth! Refuse, and he dies."

Chapter Six

IT was nine o'clock at night when *The Four Winds* modestly stepped down the river on her quest of adventures. As she got into the channel, she began to dip her farewell to all and sundry. A fine rain, mixed with sleet, was falling; and the ground-swell informed the knowing that there was a heavy sea running outside.

Wyncote, unmindful of the weather, leaned against the port rail and watched the million city lights till the mist intervened. Now that he was aboard, he regretted it; and yet he knew that he could have made no wiser move. For many weeks he would not have the fear of meeting some one he knew, and his mental distress would subside to something negligible.

He had dined ashore before coming on board, not caring to meet his fellow-adventurers the first night out.

Whither had Belinda gone? She was no longer at the cabaret nor at the rooming-house. She had promised her future address; but at the last moment it had not turned up. There would be no mail here, for he had not told her that he was assuming the name of Carey. Oh, well; he would get over it. And yet he would wonder about her for a long time to come, possibly because she was one of the two friendly souls he had left behind. Thornden had promised to get in touch with her.

Perhaps there would be a letter from Thornden. So he left the rail and went down to inquire if there was any mail for John Carey. A leisurely search revealed a single letter, which Wyncote carried to the smoke-room. The letter contained news of a quality that set on end the short hairs on the back of his neck.

"My dear boy:

"Some day you will forgive me, I know. But it was absolutely necessary for you to go away at once. You had received a tremendous mental shock, leaving you without plans, setting you somewhat adrift. The little cabaret girl is a case in point. She is charming; but what do you know of her? Nothing except that she sings and is very pretty. Besides, something queer is going on—what about, neither of us can guess. Your set-to in the garden and the receipt of the stiletto prove it. Men are carefully watching you. Why? We don't know; but there's no comedy in it, I'll wager. So I decided to perpetrate a low-down trick. I wrote that black-hand letter. Nothing else would have got you out of town. I might have had a son like you, but for chance-medley. When you return, I promise to make any amends you suggest."

"Thornden."

Wyncote rushed out on deck. He balled the offending letter and flung it aside, careless in his anger where it fell or who found it. At once it was retrieved by a deckhand who seemed interested in Wyncote's movements.

Wyncote's objective was the bridge. When they dropped the pilot, he would drop with him. Fortunately, he had not unpacked; he was ready. His request, however, was refused, British fashion, curtly. The roll was dangerous; he would have to descend by the rope ladder, sure of a cold ducking. The shock of the water might loosen his grip, and they never could pick him up in

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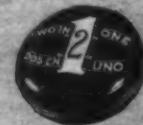
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The sea is never still; yet there's a silence in her great throb which is like a cool cathedral aisle to the weary pilgrim. Our Western plains, the savannahs of the tropics, the steppes of Asia, the droning valleys of the Orient, and the dumb, austere crags of great mountains speak to man's spirit in their silence. They do not fret us. They have their moods no less colorful than the vivacious life of fevered cities. But they bestow a balm upon the sick of soul, upon those whom strife, greed, wealth, sorrow and necessity have spent and made stale.

Midsummer is the time to visit the cool and silent places of the world. Europe's beautiful cathedrals, its museums and monuments; strange peoples of the far East at work and play; life and color and surprise at every turn wherever the seeker for knowledge and interest may wander.

Last year about two million Americans visited their national parks, nearly two citizens out of every hundred of our entire population. We are waking up to the value of that unexcelled recreative educator called Travel. The Rocky Mountain Park in Colorado alone entertained 224,211 of us. Hot Springs, Arkansas, saw 164,175 appreciate its impressive beauty; then came Mount Rainier Park in Washington, to whose rugged regions 161,473 live Americans traveled for rest and recreation. Yellowstone, Yosemite and Wyoming Parks in California, the Grand Canyon of Arizona and Platt in Oklahoma each had more than 100,000 visitors, and all showed an increase of 25 per cent or more over the previous season.

There are other regions of like interest, North, South, East and West, while Canada is a veritable paradise of exploratory opportunity, as romantic and thrilling as any land the world over.

Noise is a blight, silence a blessing. Little journeys to where silence speaks to us is a midsummer dream which all may realize in this day of economical, safe and comfortable travel.

this dirty weather. If he wanted to leave the ship, he could do so at Funchal, the first stop. That was final.

"How soon can I get a drink?" he asked the smoke-room steward, upon returning to those cosy quarters.

"In half an hour, sir."

So, half an hour later, he drank two pegs of Scotch, and went down to his cabin, his soul filled with that kind of wrath for which there is but one curative—fisticuffs. Tricked and trapped! What right had Thornden to meddle with his affairs? He had cheated Belinda out of her job, besides—a good job, where they treated her decently. It was a damned shabby trick, and he determined to let Thornden know what he thought of it, first opportunity.

BUT next morning his wrath was gone the way of the nor'easter. There was a blue sky above, a blue sea below, a brisk but temperate wind, and the old *Petrel* under his feet. He prowled about the ship, noting the changes and the things that hadn't been changed. He felt a longing to climb to the crow's-nest. Many a time he had gone up there and joined the lookout man for an hour. There one truly got the look of the sea, the rocking circle that encompassed one. None of the old crew remained, and he was both sad and grateful for that.

Of course Thornden had had the kindest of motives, but nevertheless it was a shabby trick. Principally, it intimated that he wasn't able to take care of himself where women were concerned, and that Belinda wasn't the right sort. But on the other point, Thornden was right. There was something queer about those watchers and the stiletto. No one had attacked him, but everything pointed to some future attack. Something, probably, he had inherited from his father. There would be no escape from that: ghosts would continually thrust themselves out of the past to harass him. He would face what he could and run away from the others.

Perhaps Thornden knew something that John Wyncote would never know except by accident, and had got him to sea to save him the additional heartache. This watching related to it. The old fellow hadn't acted politely, but he had acted with the best will in the world.

Something he ought not to know. The old distaste surged over him, and he stared moodily at the water-line where the sea's little white fingers grasped futilely at the unfeeling hull. Was there something worse in the background, something worse than rooking the guileless? Among his father's papers he had found nothing of a leading character. But what about the papers of "Jarvis"?

He got out his pipe. He would be four months beyond reach of those who watched him and who knew what he did not know. New scenes and new faces: it would toughen him to the point where he could meet the blow without going under; he would have built himself up to it.

He began to smoke. The deckhand, who was reefing the weather canvas hard by, eyed Wyncote speculatively, and a smile touched one corner of his lips. Wyncote happened to turn.

"I say," he called, "how long have you been on this ship?"

"First voyage, sir."

Wyncote could not ticket the accent. "Where are you from?"

"Sardinia, sir. But I've lived in America."

"I see," said Wyncote, and turned again to the inspection of the dissolving circles of malachite below.

The seaman went on with his reefing. He used a particularly ugly dirk-knife for snipping his twine, and from time to time glanced covertly at Wyncote's substantial back.

WYNCOTE knocked the ash from his pipe and decided to read till luncheon. There was an open library in the lounge-room, and he ransacked this for something that would take him out of himself, as they say, and fell upon "Rodney Stone." They were old friends. As his chair was on the port side, and as the wind was too stiff for reading, he proceeded into the smoke-room and curled up in a padded corner.

But before he began to read, he casually ran his glance over the men who were his companions in search of comfort. Middle-aged, all of them, but of good type, sportsmen enough to want a real sea voyage. *The Four Winds* would give them what they wanted. She was rolling decently enough in a beam sea, the aftermath of last night's blow. The roll would have been hardly perceptible on one of the giant liners.

At the card-table in Wyncote's corner a portly gray-haired man was playing solitaire. There was something vaguely familiar about the ruddy face.

The man looked up unexpectedly and caught Wyncote's eye.

"Quite a boat," he said as he rifled the cards for a fresh deal.

"Yes, it is."

"Story about her, too. Used to be owned by a chap named Wyncote, the fellow who turned out to be Jarvis of the bucket-shops. I knew Wyncote; you couldn't help but like him. I was a guest on this boat to Jamaica before the war. There was a boy. Nice-looking little chap, and all over the ship. Wonder what's become of him? Queer, but even now I can't get this Jarvis side of the man. But in New York, uptown never knows what's going on downtown. So I'm taking the trip out of sentiment, kind of. Tough on the boy."

"Oh, he has the millions, you know," said Wyncote, sick at heart. The first man he spoke to!

"Well, I'm sorry for that youngster. No matter where he goes, the thing will be popping up. I knew Wyncote for years. A quiet chap, but a man you'd grow fond of in no time. I still can't see it. Never any women on board. But as Jarvis, I suppose he had all that stuff he wanted. There's a vague rumor that he married one of them; but I don't know. . . . My name is Henley."

"Mine is Carey," replied Wyncote, wondering if the man heard him.

"Wife with you?"

"I'm not married."

Henley chuckled. "Then you're going to be lonesome. As far as I can get it, this is a second honeymoon for old married couples. No children at all. There's a handful of spinsters who are making believe they're on the loose, a divorcee or two. You young folks! The trouble you make for yourselves before you marry! It's afterward that counts. I went through it all. I married. For a year I was the most perfect lover—then I became a husband. The fire is gone, but the embers of courtship remain. Wife isn't a good sailor, but she would take this trip because I want to sort o' play buccaneer before I die." Henley laughed.

Wyncote warmed to him despite the fact that the man had opened a grievous wound: warmed to him because he did not speak ill of the man whose hospitality he had once accepted.

HENLEY resumed his solitaire, and Wyncote shut his unread book and went outside. Coming toward him was a handsome woman between thirty-five and forty, with a beautiful Pekinese under her arm. He stepped aside for her. He had met her somewhere; her face wasn't just vaguely familiar; it stirred his recollection as vividly as if it had been yesterday that he had met her. She, however, evinced no sign of recog-



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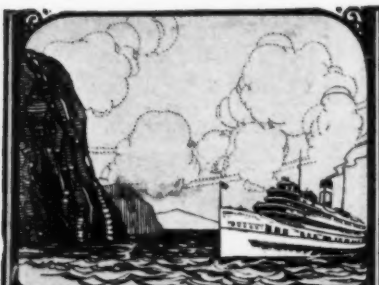
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nition. Another blow in store for him, probably.

He now remembered that he had not made reservations for his table, and sought the chief steward.

It was astonishing what they had done to the old *Petrel*, with only a forty-four-foot beam to work around in; luxury and comfort, amusement and speed, with a dash of adventure never to be found on the big fellows. Human nature! One would have thought that a craft like this would have been swamped by young folks adventure-struck; whereas middle-aged folks had pre-empted her. Old fogies, in search of a thrill! He was going to like them.

The dining-room at luncheon was only half-filled. At sea the tummy is generally impervious to the dictates of the will, and some of the adventurers were wishing they had taken theirs out of books. *The Petrel*—she would always be that to him—was stanch in any kind of weather, but she had to kowtow to thirty-footers when they were on the march.

Forward he noticed a small musician's balcony containing a radio set. The tables were ordinary dining-tables seating from four to eight, the chairs being bolted or foot-loose as the weather ordered. The food was very good and of much variety; but stores would have to be replenished several times before the return. While waiting for his second course, he inspected the passenger

list. No one he knew, but a few names he had heard of. He knew now where he had met the woman with the Peke: in many moving-picture theaters. She was the famous Alice Channing of the films. He wouldn't have to worry about her.

After the substantial luncheon he began to feel drowsy. For two or three days out, the roll of the sea and the velocity of the wind always affected him this way. As he was about to turn into his cabin passage, who should come out of it briskly but the deckhand, the Sardinian seaman! The man pressed by and proceeded smartly to the engine-room ladder, down which he disappeared.

Wyncote stroked his chin thoughtfully. This chap was absolutely out of bounds. He was neither steward, carpenter nor engineer. By rights he should report the man; but he decided to make the report only if there happened to be a second violation.

He started for his cabin door, but stopped as if thrust back by a hand. The door opposite to his opened cautiously, and a head came out—a beautiful head, a bit tousled. A hypnotic pause, and then the door closed with the crack of a pistol-shot.

But Wyncote knew that he had seen Belinda White!

(Fascinating indeed are the adventures described in the forthcoming installment of Mr. Mac Grath's delightful story. Be sure to read it, in the next, the August, issue.)

THEY ASKED FOR IT

(Continued from page 74)

"Over the other side. Go back through the office and go down the odd-numbers corridor."

By this time Mr. Peters was weak. His fury was spent, but in his heart was a flame. Having found 1145, it was impossible to find the attendant who had the key to his locker. He had gone home to supper, or had been promoted. It took five minutes of calling "Locker! Locker!" in his wet bathing-suit, before Mr. Peters could even raise an answer. It was half an hour more before he was dressed.

At the doorway where he had parted with Mrs. Peters he found her. She was worried, but when she saw the red gleam in her husband's eye, she knew that there was more important work ahead for her than explaining that the spot he had indicated as a trysting-place was the one next to the one Mr. Peters had finally patronized. She realized that her most imminent duty was to get him out of range of his tormentors.

"Come, Walter," she said, "let's walk around and see the sights. Let's go over to the amusement park."

"Amusement park!" snarled Mr. Peters. If he had been a character in a story, he would have snarled: "Amusement park indeed!"

Gently she led him up the street, talking to him of old schooldays in Dyke, of the cool lakes of Michigan where they went for the summer, of the beauty of growing old gracefully, of anything to take his fevered mind away from the path toward which she knew it was veering. Thus engaged in soothing conversation, they entered the precincts devoted to violent amusement in the shape of roller-coasters, pits, and bumping arrangements guaranteed to amuse you until you were black and blue.

Suddenly Mrs. Peters saw her husband's eye light up. She followed his gaze and saw, with a sinking feeling at her heart, that he had come upon the group of young people who had frolicked across his chest or the boat coming down. What she did not know was that, in the two young men, Mr. Peters had also recognized the youths who had splashed water on him as he stood

at the ocean's rim. She knew that the young people were in bad favor with Mr. Peters, but she did not know how bad.

The particular form of amusement in front of which the group was standing was called "The Old Mill." This is one of the less physical methods of entertainment at Coney Island, and consists of riding in a sort of gondola through a series of dark caverns until you are tired of it. As you stand at the ticket booth, you see boats emerging from the cave's mouth, the young lady occupants looking a bit disheveled, the young gentlemen dominant, and the children crying with fright. Even as the Peters' watched, a boat came out bearing the family who had eaten its luncheon on Mr. Peters' knee. It was a coincidence which convinced Mrs. Peters that the Influence which rules the world is, at heart, a malign one.

Mr. Peters stepped quickly to the ticket-booth. "Ten rides," he said in a hoarse voice, and turning with the tickets to the group of young people, he said: "Come on, I'll give you all a trip." Mrs. Peters he motioned to stay behind.

They reached the boat just as the fated family were preparing to scramble out. "Stay in," said Mr. Peters with a friendly smile which was nothing short of ghastly in its significance. "Stay in, my friends. I've got tickets for you for another ride. We'll all go together." And although the family was not quite sure whether it wanted to go around again or not, there was something commanding in Mr. Peters' manner which prevented their refusing. Besides, it wasn't going to cost anything.

So Mrs. Peters stood and watched the little gondola with its precious freight bump off into the darkness. Then she turned and hid her face.

When, ten minutes later, she saw the prow pushing again out of the exit cavern, she did not have to peer through the shadows to see who was in it. She knew that Mr. Peters would be alone. And so he was.

Another strange chapter in the history of the sinister Mr. Peters will be reported in an early issue.

THE KNIFE THROWER

(Continued from page 49)

care of myself. She wasn't, I fancy, convinced. The way she looked at a man with those scared black eyes! But our young friend wasn't taking any notice of either of us. He was busy. All this, of course, happened in a few seconds. He had raised his hand, slowly, very slowly, and had caught the wrist of my hand on his shoulder. I felt his fingers round my wrist. Tight.

"Steady, boy!" I said. I'd have to hit him, and I didn't want to do that. At least, I told myself I didn't want to.

The girl suddenly pulled at my arm—hard. I was pleased to notice she wasn't one of those maidens steeped in scent. That young Armenian had strong fingers. He simply hadn't spoken one word yet. His conversation was limited to trying to break my wrist. My wrist! Then he spoke. He said: "You swine!" That was enough. His back was to the road—muddy as a lane in hell. Most appropriate, I thought, and caught him one on the chin so that he was in it flat on his back. His tie looked fancier than ever in the mud, too. The girl screamed. "All right," I said. "All right." Trying, you know, to comfort the poor kid. She was rushing after her man, but I had my arm like a bar across the door. She stared at me like a frightened animal.

I said: "Listen to me, girl. You're in bad company."

"She is now," a voice said. The young Armenian had picked himself up. He looked a mess, fine clothes and all. I thought he would try to rush me, but not he! He just smiled and said: "I'll make a note of that, Sir Charles Fasset-Faith. Come on, Manana."

But I wasn't letting Manana go just yet. The poor kid!

"What's his name?" I asked.

SHE stared at me, trembling. I've never seen such white teeth outside the middle of Africa.

"His name?" I repeated, as I might to a child. "His name, Manana?"

She whispered: "Aram Valarian."

That young Armenian's voice hit me on the back of the neck like a knife. "You'll pay for that, Manana! See if you don't!"

It isn't rhetoric about the knife. It was like a knife. I'll tell you more about knives later.

"Oh!" she sobbed.

"Look here," I said to the devilish boy, "if you so much as—"

He laughed. The girl bolted under my arm and joined him. He just laughed. I said: "Good night, Manana. Don't let him hurt you." She didn't seem to dare look at me. They went, up that muddy lane. He had her by the arm, and he had her tight. There aren't many lamps in that *beau quartier*, and a few steps took them out of my sight. I heard a scream, and then a sob. That settled Aram Valarian so far as I was concerned. Then another sob—from the back of that nasty darkness. I couldn't, of course, go after them then. It would look too much as though I was bidding for possession of the young Armenian's love-lady. But at that moment I made up my mind I'd land that pretty boy sometime soon. That scream had made me feel just a trifle sick. That was personal. And then, I was against Aram Valarian impersonally, because I've always been for law and order. Some of us must be, God knows, in this world. And it was against all law and order that young Mr. Aram Valarian—imagine any man having a name like that!—should be loose in the world. He was rotten bad, and worse for being so devilish handsome. Crook was too simple a word for Mr. Aram. One imagined him with women—with this poor

soul of a Manana. Life's dirty, I know, but need it be quite so dirty as Aram Valarians make it?

Of course, Venice and Napier knew nothing about either of them. They must have just drifted in, they said. They had—into my life.

THE very next morning I rang up our friend H— at Scotland Yard and asked him if he knew anything about an Aram Valarian. Oh, didn't he! Had a dossier of him as long as my overdraft. H— said: "The Prince of the Armenians, that's Aram Valarian's pet name. Profession: counterfeiter. But we've never yet caught him or his gang."

The cinema wasn't in it with our fancy young friend. The police had been after him for five years. Once they'd almost got him for knifing a Lascar. Murder, right enough, but they'd had to release him for lack of evidence. The Lascar, H— said, had probably threatened to give away a cocaine plant, and Aram Valarian had slit his throat. Suspected of cocaine-smuggling, living on immoral earnings of women, and known to be the finest existing counterfeiter of Bank of England five-pound notes. Charming man, Mr. Aram Valarian.

"I want to land him," I told H—.

"Thanks very much," said he. "So do we."

"Well, how about that girl of his—Manana something?"

"Manana Gulest? Catch her giving him away! She adores the beast, and so do they all, those who aren't terrified of him."

I said: "Well, we'll see. I want to get that boy. I don't like him."

H—'s last words to me were: "Now, look here, Charles, don't go playing the fool down there. I know the East End is nowadays supposed to be as respectable as Kensington, and that the cinema has got it beat hollow for pools of blood; but believe me, a chap is still liable to be punctured in the ribs by a clever boy like Aram Valarian. So be a good fellow and go back to your nice old Navy, which wouldn't harm anyone."

H— was right. I was a fool, certainly. But God drops the folly into the fields, and it's our job to pick up bits of it. It's not decent to go on being wise all one's life. Besides, the badness of our young friend was near obsessing me—and, let's be candid, I wanted some fun! I've never been one for dinner-parties, what-nots and the artless prattle of footlight favorites; and so, thought I, could a man spend his leave more profitably than in landing a snake like Aram Valarian? Whereupon I took myself off down to the East End with my oldest tweeds, a toothbrush and a growth on my chin. George Tarlyon came with me. He had scented a row that night, and not God nor devil nor man can keep George from putting both his feet into the inside of a row. Besides, he wanted to have a look at Miss Manana Gulest. I wasn't sorry, for you can't have a better man in a row than George Tarlyon, and he'd make a miser forget he was at the Ritz with his damfool remarks. So we took two rooms in Canning Town E., and very nice rooms they were, over a ham-and-beef shop, and walked from pub to pub watching each other's beards grow and listening for Aram Valarian. At least I listened, and George talked.

You would naturally have thought that the likely place to find that smart young man would be roundabout what journalists call the "exclusive hotels and night-clubs of the West End." Not a bit of it. We soon heard something of Aram Valarian's ways from one tough or another. Tarlyon's idea of getting information delicately about a

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man was to threaten to fight anyone who wouldn't give it to him, and we soon collected quite a bit that way. Mr. Valarian was a socialist, it appeared, and hated the rich. He hated the rich so bitterly, in fact, that though he had a pretty fat bank-account of his own, he still clung to his old quarters in the East End. But no one knew, or cared to give, the address of his "old quarters," which were probably various. Tarlyon threatened to fight any number of toughs who didn't "know" Mr. Valarian's address, but they preferred to fight, and in the end George got tired. Oh, yes, Aram Valarian was certainly watched by the police, but he was generally somewhere else while the police were watching him. And Miss Manana Gulest was certainly his young lady-love, and she loved him and lived with him, but he wouldn't marry her because of another principle he had, that it was wrong for a man of independent spirit to have a wife of his own. Charming young man, Mr. Aram Valarian. But it appeared he loved Miss Manana very decidedly and discouraged competition. It also appeared that before he had taken up the life of a blood, he had been a juggler with knives in the music-halls. Knives again! Tarlyon thought that a pretty good joke at the time, but he didn't enjoy it nearly so much later on.

We had been pottering about down there several days, and George was just beginning to think of a nice shave and a bath, when we hit on our first clue. The clue was walking up a grimy side-street by the East India Docks.

"Oh, pretty!" says George. And she certainly was, that Manana Gulest. She hadn't seen us. She was in a hurry.

"We follow," I said.

"Naturally," says George. "A nice girl like that! What do you take me for, a Y. M. C. A.?"

WE followed. She walked fast, did Miss Manana. And it was queer, how she lighted up that grimy God-forsaken street. You might have taken her for a young gentlewoman "doing" the East End in a hurry, the way she walked. Tall, lithe, well and quietly dressed—Aram Valarian's property! And he'd made her scream with pain.

"Now what?" snapped George.

She'd been about twenty yards ahead of us. Street darkish, deserted, lined with warehouses, and all closed because it was a Saturday afternoon. Suddenly no Manana Gulest! We slipped after her quick as you like. She had dived down a narrow passage between the warehouses. We were just in time to see the tail of her skirt whisking through a door in the wall a few yards up—and just in time to cut in after her.

"Oh!" she gasped. We must have looked a couple of cutthroats. And it was dark in there. I was panting—nothing like a sailor's life for keeping you thoroughly out of training, unless it's a soldier's. But George was all there, being a good dancer.

"Miss Gulest, I believe?" he asks. All in whispers—she staring at us. "I'm so glad to meet you, Miss Gulest—"

She just stared at us. She was tall, as women go, but we simply towered over the poor child. Then she recognized me, and went red as a carnation. I couldn't think why. George said comfortingly: "There, there!" Then she panted all in a jumble: "I'm sorry I was rude to you the other night. Really I am. Please go away now, please!"

"I'm afraid we can't do that," I whispered. "We want—"

George, with his foot, gently shut the door behind us. We were in the passage of the house, or whatever it was. It was pitch-dark. I lit a match.

"But what is it, what do you want?" the girl moaned.

"You may well ask," chuckled George, the idiot, at the top of his voice.

"Oh!" She caught her breath. That gave the show away, all right. Aram Valarian was at home, whatever home was. The match went out. And the lights went on, *snap!* Aram Valarian stood at the end of the passage, pointing a revolver. George said: "Come, come!"

"Come here!" says the Armenian to the girl.

"No, you don't!" said George, hauling her to him by the arm.

Aram Valarian smiled in that way he had. "If you don't let her go at once," he says, "I shoot."

"You what!" I said.

Tarlyon laughed. You can hear him. "Don't," he says, "be a damn fool all your life, but stand at attention when you speak to my friend here, because he's a knight. And put that gun away, else I'll come and hit you."

I couldn't help laughing. The young Armenian looked so surprised. He'd never before been talked to in just that way, and it bothered him—he was used to doing the laughing and being taken seriously. But I had laughed too soon. There was a whizz by my ear, and a thud on the door behind me, and a knife an inch deep in the panel. The surprise gave Manana a chance to slip away. She was by the Armenian now at the end of the passage. There wasn't light enough to make out what was behind them, a stairway up or a stairway down. Down, I guessed, into the bowels of the earth. Aram Valarian was smiling. I'll say it was well thrown, that knife.

Tarlyon was livid. "By God," he whispered, "threw a knife at us! We are having a nice week-end. At him, Charles!"

I held him back. What was the use? A little child could have led us at knife-throwing, and there wasn't a drop of childishness in that fancy Armenian. He said, with that infernal sneer of his:

"Gentlemen, I merely wanted to show you what to expect if you were to advance another step. I wouldn't kill you—not yet. One of you, yes. But it would cause comment, the disappearance of two fools. However, I might slice bits off your ears. Further, this is my house. Are you not intruding? Gentlemen, you may go."

AND, you know, we did. What the devil else was there to do? If Tarlyon with his infernal chuckling hadn't roused the man out of his lair, we might have taken him by surprise and learned something of the whereabouts of that counterfeiting business. But as it was, "go" was us. And the way Tarlyon swore when we were outside made me glad it was a Saturday afternoon and the warehouses were closed, else he might have corrupted the poor workmen.

"What do we do now?" he asked at last. "Lump it?"

"Well, at any rate, we know his address now."

"Address be blowed! That's not an address, Charles, but what Argentines call a *pied-à-terre*. I'll bet our smart friend doesn't wear silk pajamas in that hole—and by heaven, there you are!"

He made me jump. I hadn't, didn't see anything. I thought it was another knife.

"Never mind," snapped George. "Too late now. Come on, man; don't stare so!"

We walked on. After reaching daylight from that passage between the warehouses, we had turned to the left, walked on a hundred yards or so by the front of the warehouses, then to the left again. This, running parallel to the passage, was a row of quite respectable-looking houses all stuck together, as quite respectable-looking houses should do in these times. There are streets and streets of them down there, and I'm told white women sometimes marry Chinamen just for the pleasure of living in them. But

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white women will do anything. We had come to the end of a block when Tarilyn set up that howl and then shut me up.

"What the deuce!" I said again.

George said, walking on: "Boy has made one mistake. Naughty boy. Now have a look at that house we passed. Don't stare as though you were an American looking at the Prince of Wales. Casually. The corner one."

I turned and looked, casually. It was a house like another, and I said so. George asked me how far I thought it was from the passage in which I had nearly fielded Aram's knife with my ear. I said it must be a good way—two hundred yards at least. There was a whole block of warehouses and a row of houses in between.

"Quite," said George. We walked on. "Then how did Mr. Aram get there so quick? Not by the road. I just saw a piece of his charming face round the curtain of one of the windows. His one mistake, to have let me see him. There must be an underground passage about two hundred yards long between his warehouse address and his residence. You'll bet the police have never spotted it yet, and I only spotted it because he was so eager to see us well away. I don't think he likes us, Charles. But I'd be pleased to know who is supposed to be living in that house. And I'd take a bet that there's a nice counterfeiting matinee going on this very moment somewhere between that house and that warehouse-passageway. Now you say something."

"The point is, George, do you think he saw you spot him?"

GEORGE chuckled. "There's always a snag. But I don't know. He mayn't have seen I got him. But we will have to act as if he had. Get him quick, else he'll be in the air. What's the time now? Nearly eight. We'll get back to civilization, try and catch H— at his home address, come down here tonight and surround the place. Fun! Hurray!"

I said: "Look here, George—"

He looked at me sharply. "I know what you are going to say, Charles. Don't say it. You're old enough to know better."

But I stuck to my point. We must let H— know at once, yes. Post men at the warehouse entrance and the house entrance, certainly. Catch Aram Valarian and his friends, decidedly. But we must give Manana Gulest another chance. She was only a kid—twenty-one or two, at most.

George said: "Charles, don't be a silly old man. She is probably as bad as any of them. You can't tell. Girls don't live a life like that unless they want to."

I knew he was wrong. I just knew it. So I didn't argue about it, but stuck to my point. The girl must be got out of the way before the place was raided. If the police found her there, she would be jailed—perhaps for years. I simply wouldn't have it. The girl was at the beginning of her life. To jail her now would be to ruin her for all her life.

George, of course, didn't need to be convinced. He was only leading me on. George wouldn't have put the police on a girl for trying to murder him—although he and Ralph Trevor did once apply to Scotland Yard for a warrant for attempted murder against Lady Surplice on the ground that she had bored them to death at a luncheon-party. But I was right about Manana Gulest—good Lord, don't I know I was right! And I'm glad I sort of paid a tribute in advance to the memory of that gentle girl. This had been her life, was her life, these dreary streets, these foul alleys. Aram Valarian had found her, dazzled her, seduced her, bullied her, broken her. What chance had the girl, ever? She was timorous, you could see. A timid girl. No mat-

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ter how kindly you talked to her, she stared at you like a rabbit at a weasel. Life was the weasel to Manana Gulest—life and her lover. Who knows what the girl hadn't already suffered in her small life, what hell! Maybe she had loved Aram Valarian, maybe she loved him now. That wasn't against her. Saints love cads. It's the only way you can know a saint, mostly. Some of the nicest women George and I knew had been divorced for blackguards. Well, if Manana loved Aram, she would be punished enough by seeing him go to prison for a long stretch. One might find her a job on the stage, with her looks and figure. Good Lord, the way that girl looked at you when you so much as opened your mouth, her black eyes shivering as though her heart was hurt.

WE found a taxi in the Whitechapel Road. To civilization! George was quiet. I wondered if he thought I was in love with the girl. Me, at my age! No, I didn't think I was in love. One doesn't go about falling in love with people. But I often find myself thinking of Manana Gulest. It's merely that she appealed to my imagination then, and does now more than any other woman I have ever seen, from Shanghai to the Embassy Club. That Manana with her hurt gentle eyes—I wouldn't be sorry to see her again.

As we rattled through Cheapside—deserted on a Saturday afternoon—Tarlyon said: "We will have to think of a way of getting the girl out of the place beforehand. But how? If we warn her, she will naturally pass the glad news on to her man. Naturally."

Naturally, I agreed. She wouldn't be herself if she went back on her man. I said I would think of a way as I bathed and dressed for dinner. As George dropped me at my flat, he said: "Let's say dinner in an hour's time at White's. Meanwhile I'll ring up H—. Maybe he will dine with us. I suppose it will be about midnight before we get down there with his men. I'm not going to have knives chucked at me on an empty stomach—and I'll not be left out of this, not for all the knives in Christendom. This is a real treasure-hunt as compared to chasing poppycock with children round Regent's Park, and chickenfood with flappers up Piccadilly. I said midnight, Charles, to give you a chance of getting Manana clear away. 'By."

But Fate wouldn't be bullied by My Lord Viscount Tarlyon. Fate had ideas of her own. Or is Fate a he? No, it would be a woman, for she hates slim women. I hadn't finished glancing at my letters, while my bath was running, when my man announced a young lady. "A young what!" I said. He was surprised too. I went into the sitting-room. Manana Gulest was by the open door, as though she was afraid to come right in. I said: "Thank Heaven you've come!" Extraordinary thing to say, but I said it. She tried to smile. All scared eyes! I thought she was going to faint, tried to make her sit down, fussed about. I'm trying to tell you I was shy. So was she, shy as a virgin.

"I'm frightened," she said, as though that would be news for me. Then it all came out in that jumbled way of hers. She had given Aram the slip, found my address in the telephone-book. Had come to warn me!

"To warn me!" I gasped. The cheek of these young people! Here were we and all Scotland Yard after them—and they were warning me!

"Yes. Listen." Then she stopped. Suddenly she blushed crimson.

I said: "Now, Manana, what is it? What on earth is there to blush about?"

She tried not to stammer: "I can't help it. Aram's after you. He's out to kill. He

hates you once and he hates you twice because he thinks I'm in love with you. I don't know why. He's just mad jealous. I know Aram. And they'll never catch him. Never. The fool police! I just thought I'd warn you. Go away, please go away—out of London. I feel that if you die it will be my fault. He'll throw you if you don't go away. I know Aram. You'll be walking up Piccadilly one evening, this evening perhaps. Suddenly, *swish*, a knife in your back! No one will know who threw it in the crowd. He could throw it from the top of a bus and no one notice. He never misses."

I said: "So, Manana, he thinks you love me. Why does he think that?"

She wasn't blushing now. It was as though there was no blood left in her. White face, eyes ashine like black silver. She was quite calm. She had never moved from the open door. Her eyes wouldn't meet mine. She just said: "Now I've warned you, I must go back. He will miss me. I'm glad I warned you. I think you must be a good man. Good-by. But go away, please go away at once. Good-by."

I couldn't stop her by touching her, else she would have got scared. I just told her not to go back East. We were going to raid Aram Valarian's place that night. I said: "You came to warn me. But I was just coming to warn you. My friend and I don't want you to go to prison, Manana. You had better stay away from there for the present. I can find you somewhere to stay tonight, if you like."

She opened her eyes very wide, but all she said was: "I must go back at once."

"But—" I began.

She said: "You don't understand. I came to warn you because you are a good man. You are, aren't you? I'm sorry I was led into laughing at you that night. He pinched my arm when I didn't laugh. But I must stand by Aram. He is my man, good or bad. He has been kind to me in his way. He loves me in his way. I must go back to him at once. If you make me promise not to tell him about the police, I won't. I won't tell him, anyway, I think. He must go to prison. It is time, because he will do more murders. I hate murders. But I will go with him to prison. You see, that will make it all right between Aram and me. Good-by."

IT was good-by. I knew it was no use arguing. With some women one doesn't know when it's any good or not; with a few, one does. They're the ones who count. I could hold her by force, of course—for her own good. Dear God, the lies we can tell ourselves! For that would have been a lie. If I held her by force from going back to Aram Valarian, it would be for selfish reasons. She must do as she thought right. Everyone must always, in spite of God and man. I'm glad I have never married; I would have made a mess of it just by always seeing my wife's point of view.

I saw Manana downstairs to the door. I opened the door. Rain was making night of what should have been twilight. We stood close in the open doorway. I said: "Perhaps they will let you off. I will do my best. Come to me for help later on. Good-by, Manana. Thank you."

She smiled—the first and last smile I ever saw light that face. "I must never see you again," she said; and then—the laughter of Aram Valarian tore the smile from her face.

My rooms, as you know, are in Curzon Street—at the rather grubby, poor man's end where Curzon Street, as though deprived of the residential support of the noble family of that name, slopes helplessly down to a slit in a gray wall called Lansdowne Passage. When it is dark in London, it is darker in Lansdowne Passage. It leads, between Lansdowne House and the wreck of Devonshire House, to Berkeley Street. There

is a vertical iron bar up the middle of each opening, which was originally put there to prevent highwaymen making a dash through the Passage to the open country round Knightsbridge. Against that vertical iron bar leaned Aram Valarian. Fifteen yards away, a black lean shape in the dark twilight!

"Manana, I followed you!" he cried. And he laughed.

The girl whispered frantically to me: "Get in, get in, get in!"

I said, "What?" like a fool. She tried to push me inside the doorway. I was looking at her, not at Aram Valarian. There was a scream: "Mind out, Manana!" She jumped in front of me. . . . I held her as she fell backward. She just sighed.

"Manana!" the voice screamed again. The knife was up to the hilt in her throat. I think I lost my head for the first time in my life. I made a dash toward the figure in the opening of Lansdowne Passage. He didn't move. He was sobbing like a baby. Then I changed my mind and rushed back to Manana. She lay still as a cut flower. Her eyelids fluttered once or twice—and that was all. The rain was washing the blood into the gutter. My man had come down and was doing his best. I looked through the twilight at the crumpled black figure against the iron bar.

"She's dead, Aram," I called, then whispered to my man: "Go get him!" He did his best, poor devil. Aram yelled: "Yes, for you! And I'll never throw but one more knife—if I have to come back from hell to do it!" And he was gone, through Lansdowne Passage. My wretched man hadn't a chance. That night and for days there wasn't a port in England that H— left unwatched for Aram Valarian. But as in the storybooks, he has never been seen or heard of again. H— has an idea he is somewhere in the Americas. . . .

It's not quite true that Aram Valarian has never been seen or heard of again. I have seen him and heard him, quite lately—in a sort of way. Of course it is no more than a trick of the imagination. He has probably been more on my mind recently than I had realized. But it's quite definitely unpleasant, the illusion. It gets rather on a man's nerves, this idiotic talk of knives on Piccadilly. Imagination, Hilary, plays us queer dark tricks sometimes. It's no good trying to explain them with spirit talk. The mind is a dark place, and we don't know what's in the sky; and that is all there is to it.

THAT is the tale Sir Charles Fasset-Faith told his friend Hilary Townshend one night at the Celibates Club. Mr. Townshend had listened gravely. A lean, gray man, of the type conscientiously dolorous, Mr. Townshend found no aspect of this our life on earth which was not a proper occasion for the exercise of gravity, command of temper and forbearance. He therefore forbore to make any comment on his friend's tale, but merely remarked: "You ought not to stay in London, Charles. An unhealthy place, at best. Why not come down to Magralt with me tomorrow? Guy de Travest is coming. There's some fishing. Not much, and that little is poor, but you can always smoke in peace."

Sir Charles laughed. "You talk like Manana! But anyhow, I am due at Portsmouth the day after tomorrow. No, no, I'll see my time out in London. I've been in most corners of the world, Hilary, and never found romance but in London."

"Hm!" said Mr. Townshend thoughtfully. "You have an odd idea of romance, Charles. Romance! And I don't, as a general rule, believe in apparitions. H'm. Have you rung up H— to tell him of the reappearance of this remarkably unpleasant youth?"

"And he laughed me to scorn! Was



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ready, in fact, to lay a pony against Aram's being within a thousand miles of London or England."

"You never know," said Mr. Townshend gloomily. . . .

It was on the night following this conversation that the Admiral, on emerging from the Celibates Club, made an astonishing suggestion to Hunt, the commissionaire. "Hunt," said Sir Charles, "do you mind walking with me just down to the Piccadilly corner? I will know then that I am actually moving and not just standing here and thinking I'm moving. You see my point, Hunt?"

"Certainly, Sir Charles. I quite understand."

"I'm glad some one does!" sighed our gentleman.

The commissionaire with the lined face had himself in his youth been a martyr to insobriety and could sympathize with the Admiral's probable condition, while admiring the correct address with which, as became a gentleman of the sea, he bore his inflection.

"See anyone loitering about, Hunt?" the Admiral asked as they came to the Piccadilly corner.

"No, Sir Charles."

"Good night, Hunt."

THOSE were the last words the ancient commissionaire was ever to hear from his good friend the Admiral. For as Sir Charles made to cross Piccadilly from Albemarle Street to St. James' Street, he heard that *whizz* behind him. He had been expecting it, but it startled him. He half-turned and jumped sideways, colliding with the bonnet of a fast-moving car. There was a terrific din about him as he raised himself to his hands and knees. It deafened him, the din of engines and voices. Many voices seemed to be arguing. Then as he rose to his feet, the din happily receded. There was

silence, but the silence of a pleasant voice. He walked on to St. James' Street, glad things had been no worse. Then he saw the face of Aram Valarian. It was just in front of him, smiling. He was holding out his hand to Sir Charles, smiling. He was beautiful. Behind his shoulder was Manana. She was laughing at Sir Charles' bewilderment. Then as he stared at them, they pointed over his shoulder: behind him, in the middle of Piccadilly, there was a great crowd around a large motorcar and a prostrate figure that looked oddly like a dingy travesty of himself. That is how it was, but still he did not understand. Aram Valarian and Manana laughed at him, and each took him by an arm and walked with him down the slope of St. James' Street.

There was a valley at the foot of St. James' Street, and over the valley a golden cloud as large as a continent. Manana was still laughing happily. "Aram died last night in Paris," she told Sir Charles. "He was just coming over to London to kill you. Isn't it idiotic? I don't say he loves you now, but he's willing to consider an intelligent friendship. Aren't you, Aram? Death isn't at all what the Salvation Army thinks, Charles. You'll be surprised. You're just yourself—that's all. Funny you have to die before you're allowed to be yourself. Oh, look! Look, Charles! Isn't it beautiful! Charles, let's walk and walk and walk!"

"Here—and me?" cried Aram Valarian. "Young man," said the Admiral severely, "you just stay where you are. I've been waiting a long time for this walk with Manana."

"I'll follow you. Where are you going to walk to?"

"You can't follow us, Aram," laughed Manana. "They won't let you, yet. Naturally, dear, considering how awful you've been. Come on, Charles, come on! We'll walk toward God and back."

A FATHER WHO DARED

(Continued from page 94)

"He's the perfect product of his parent," I returned. "But you've got to know him intimately to appreciate him. The apple of his father's eye. We've often remarked of late that you might think Barbara was marrying the Reverend Gates, the way he's concerned himself since the engagement."

THE prodigal father came up Elm Street at a quarter after eight. It must have seemed strange to him that these old familiar houses and landmarks had been back up here in Vermont all the time of his wanderings, every day and hour of his far residence abroad.

Over seventy thousand dollars had Bella Boltman "enjoyed" during the eighteen years of her "tremendous responsibility." This in a town where entire families live comfortably on an average wage of twenty-five weekly dollars. Small wonder the absentee provider found his "abandoned dependents" in the fine old Ashley house, weeping out their lives behind deep verandas and plate glass.

He rang the bell at last, however, and we may be sure his heart was thumping painfully. So many years he had thought of this moment, dreaded it. Now it had come. Some one was crossing the inner hallway. The ceiling lamp blinked on above his head. Next, a frail young woman in a black frock and white serving-apron stood framed by the narrow aperture. The father stared.

"B-B-Barbara?"

"Me? Mercy, no! I'm only Tessie—Tessie Wilsing. You want to see Barbara? She was just going out."

"Yes, I'd like to see Barbara—or her mother—"

"Mis' Boltman aint to home. She's up to Montpelier on her suffrage work. Who wants to see Barbara?"

"Just say—her father—"

The maid went white to the lips. She fell back blindly, leaving the door open. Rannard stepped in and closed it himself. Soft lights made the reception-hall cosy—ample lamps, old gold shades. Through the opened door of an adjacent room a fire burned pleasantly on a deep-tiled hearth.

Then footsteps were heard, descending the stairs.

A young woman halted on the third step from the bottom. At sight of her, Rann Boltman's bronzed complexion must have grayed to pallor.

"B-B-Barbara!" he stammered.

She was a full-blown girl, large for her age, supple as a panther and almost as deadly. She had jet-black eyes and blacker hair—a wealth of it, which she had not bobbed. The charcoal of her hair and the chalkiness of her flesh permitted vivid colors to become her admirably; a gown of scarlet now revealed her shoulders and arms. She likewise wore a file of silver leaves on her forehead like a miniature coronet; she had just finished dressing for a dinner at the John Stevens house up on Preston Hill.

Rannard Boltman, from Suez and points east, would have turned twice anywhere to contemplate this stunning young woman. What must his reactions have been in that moment as it came to him with crushing realization that this amazing exhibit of femininity was *his daughter*, flesh of his flesh and blood of his blood, and yet a child on whose rearing to maturity he had deliberately welshed? Vaguely he had expected

a gawky little flapper, perhaps—even a small-sized edition of the elephantine Bella. But this! *This!* The pride of possession, welsher or no, was almost overwhelming—it choked his throat.

And yet he became aware that this supple young woman's cool eye was boring him like a ray. Her poise seemed amazing in one of her years. It did not occur to Boltman it might be fright—or rancorous hostility.

"Barbara!" he repeated. "You are Barbara, I suppose, aren't you? I—I'm your father."

"Are you?"

RANNARD took his retribution—if retribution it was—without a protest. In a thousand years how could he hope to convey to this girl what his motivations had been once, long ago—his urges, hungers, provocations—which had driven him away, made him a wanderer, set him forever beyond the solicitude and regard of his family, placed a wall of his own construction between himself and the consideration he hungered for, now?

"Barbara," he finally managed, "I never supposed—you'd grow up—like this."

"When did you get in?" the girl asked impersonally.

"I came up on the shuttle train tonight—"

"I mean from abroad. You've been abroad, haven't you? We've understood so, from something in one of your bankers' letters."

"A week ago Thursday I landed in San Francisco. I came across country at once, but delayed a few days in New York."

"Mother's away. Harry's in Boston. I'm here alone!" She spoke as though some sort of impropriety obtained, being thus alone in that house with her father. "I was just going out."

"So the girl told me. It's—comfortable—here—isn't it?"

"You think so?"

"It looks good to me—coming in so—out of—the night."

"Yes—out of the night!"

He cringed. "Barbara—I suppose—well, we are sort of strangers—"

"Come into the library," she said.

She descended the remaining three steps and passed him with that supple, pantherish stride—a sort of gymnastic stride, a stride that fascinated the father, made his pride in her like the pain of a knife in his breast.

She did not offer to take his hat or ask him to remove the light overcoat he wore.

"I thought from what Mother has always said, you'd be—different," she said as she faced him in the library. "Maybe it's that which upsets me."

"Are you upset?" he asked her whimsically, as she turned and closed the door.

NO one knows what passed in that closed library through the next forty minutes. Even Tessie Wilsing, trying to eavesdrop, could not discover, though she had seen the meeting in the hall from the dining-room doorway and overheard and repeated what has been told here. But around nine o'clock Rannard Boltman came out of the house. He stumbled slightly going down the steps.

He found his way across town somehow. At least, about nine-thirty he rang the bell of Reverend Gates' house.

The minister responded in person. He told me, as he described the interview later, that he did not recognize his caller at once.

"Brother Gates?" inquired the intruder, removing his hat.

"Good evening. You wanted to see me?"

"A few minutes, yes. You recognize me? I'm Boltman—Rannard Boltman. I lived here in Paris—once."

It was too late for the Reverend Gates to shut out his caller, even had he been so disposed; the prodigal stood in the hallway.

The minister could only stare. Why was Rannard Boltman back? And why had he come here?

"This—way—please," the pastor suggested, and went on ahead down the hallway.

It was pleasantly warm in the study. The shades were drawn. The greenish light from the student-lamp fell over the cluttered, flat-topped desk in the center of the room, facing the door. The minister went around behind this desk and twirled the swivel chair mechanically. Boltman stood for a time as he had entered, examining his hat. He finally sank on a stiff horsehair chair.

"You're wondering why I'm here. Well, I came up today from New York. I've just been up to my house and met my daughter. I believe she intends to marry your son." That's the way he began.

The Reverend Gustavus Gates, who had reviled this man for more than a decade and a half, found the swivel strangely pleasing to his strengthless bones. He sat forward, lean forearms on the ink-splattered blotter and hands clasped tightly, eyes fixed on his caller. "That is the understanding," he responded harshly. It was not animosity, merely the dryness of his throat.

"Yes. That's good. Excellent. Well, I'm going away very shortly. Yes, tonight—on the New York Flyer. I'll not be here to see Mrs. Boltman, or attend our children's marriage. But before I left, it occurred to me to drop around this way and ask a favor. Your interest in my family has been marked—or so I'm left to infer."

Blessed relief came to the minister. The prodigal had not intruded to "make a scene." From all indications, he was "pretty much broken up." The Reverend Gates recognized the mood and felt a vast gratification; it gave him such a professional advantage.

"I've tried to act as spiritual father to your children, at least, in so far as was circum-spect. Their need has been very great, you know. Children approaching maturity without a father's influence are always under a pitiful handicap."

"So they are. Tonight I've realized how much. And while it may sound queer, that's the chief reason for calling around here before taking the train for New York. Brother Gates—I've wondered—if you'd consider it impudent—if I suggested—some material—for a sermon?"

"Material? For what sort of sermon?"

THE stricken prodigal considered his hat a long moment. He finally hitched nearer the desk and laid his left elbow on its corner. When at last he spoke it sounded as though Rannard Boltman were thinking aloud:

"I'd like to hear a sermon preached from my experience—for scores—yes, perhaps hundreds—of husbands and fathers—who find themselves right now, today, in a plight similar to mine, eighteen years ago."

"I know of few subjects on which I'd rather compose such a sermon," the Reverend Gates responded.

"All right, then. Preach a sermon, let's say, for men who've married wives without romance, who resent being married; for wives who enter matrimony through fear of spinsterhood or of confronting a lifelong struggle to support themselves in a world where competition is savage and bitter and ruthless."

The minister frowned. So Rannard Boltman wasn't repentant. Rannard Boltman still nursed his old grievance.

"Preach a sermon," the prodigal went on, his voice gaining strength, his eyes lifting with greater frequency from the hat, "—for men who suddenly see the future ahead of them—barren, unromantic, inexorable. Men who really love their homes and their wives, but want camaraderie, fair sportsmanship, good-natured give-and-take, from the women they've married. But men who confront in-



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stead irascible demands for money, money and yet more money—cutting comparisons with other women's more affluent husbands, slovenliness in household privacies, meals snatched up from corner delicatessens, unwashed dishes always in the kitchen sink, egg stains on the tablecloth, nothing ever in the refrigerator but a few shriveled pickles. Preach a sermon for these men, rapidly losing heart, who see nothing ahead of them but the privilege of earning money faster than their families can spend it, and getting nothing in return but their poor board, a few clothes, the tobacco they smoke, perhaps a noisy automobile—and sit down and ask themselves finally: is it worth it, and if so, why?"

THE minister began to look troubled and self-conscious. This man he had reviled so long in private did not appear or talk like a scoundrel. He was merely wistful, whimsical, hurt—terribly hurt.

"And preach to them," the prodigal went on, "that everything is worth it. And tell them why. Make them see that no matter how burdensome or unbearable may be the misalliance they have contracted, the moral thing is to suffer it through to the end. Show them that no blame will ever attach to their wives,—if they imagine that in going away they will be publicly punishing their wives,—that no matter how slovenly, irascible, nagging or inefficient those wives may be, public blame and odium is wholly for the men. And that public blame and odium will hound them, no matter where they flee or what they strive to become. I don't know when it started or how it came about; but society is queer that way. Not for generations, yet, will a woman be held equally guilty in an alienation, or in any way responsible for a man reaching his breaking-point and decamping. Perhaps not at all. I—"

"What is this? Sarcasm?"

"Sarcasm? Dear Lord, no! I'm speaking from my heart. And it's in a strange condition just now, after the past hour with my daughter. Preach to those men that they may seek a way out indeed—a way to better themselves, to make a fresh start, to believe that a man may be down and not out, even in matrimony, and attempt, with divine grit and resolve, to climb up and out to success and happiness—but there will be a price. Mark you: if they have children, they may be forever damned!"

"Ah!" breathed the Reverend Gates.

"They won't mind it at first, tell those men, while their children are small. But as the years creep on, they will wonder how those children are growing, are prospering—what their thoughts may be, their problems, their little heart-hopes, aspirations, joys and sorrows. The hunger to follow the development of their offspring will gnaw like a cancer. Gray twilights will come and find them far away—holidays, Christmases. Other children's cries will rise up to them from park and pavement and stab at their hearts like knives. What are their own children doing tonight, they will wonder. Something satisfying and fine will be blighted—something that makes for organization in life, gives it its ballast, will be as tar and ashes in their souls. Preach that to them, these men."

"So your going-away didn't get you anything worth while, did it, Rannard?"

"No. Only the freedom to handle my finances alone, so I could send back to my wife double what I could have allowed her had I remained with her here in Paris. All I got was mere surcease from criticism, the opportunity to engage in any business I chose, and manage it as I pleased without the prospect of a double load in case of failure: the load of financial disaster and the greater load of I Told You So at home. All I got was the freedom of working effi-

ciently—and when evening came, the chance to rest, not turn dish-washer, housemaid or amateur nurse. All I got was a place that was restful, inviting, recuperative—and a camaraderie that mellowed the heart. That's all I got. And what has it mattered? Emerson said a man could have anything on earth or in the skies, if he be only willing to pay the price. But whether we get value for the price we pay—that's the heartbreak. Tell those men from Rannard Boltman that down some future day, in their abandoned children, they'll find their retribution."

"Ah!" interrupted the Reverend Gates again.

"And from the mouths of those children grown to maturity, they will be repaid in kind. Tell them Rann Boltman said so; he gave you your authority. Tell them it's the parent who stands by the children, cares for them, protects them, nourishes them, guides, instructs and inspires them—who is tendered the approbation, the benediction, the awards of society. Tell them it's the parent who stays in contact with his or her offspring through the years of their development, who is accorded the privilege of excoriating and castigating the truant mate as weakening and felon, who comes to know the real compensation for such unselfish sacrifice. Don't fear to make it too strong. You can't!"

"Ah!" said the Reverend Gates the third time. "Such a sermon should indeed do much good!"

AND yet when Rannard Boltman had departed at last,—let himself out into the spring night alone,—the Reverend Gates sat on beside the shaded lamp and tried to cast up and simmer down what the prodigal had told him. What *had* he told him? The Reverend Gates began to wonder if something faintly ironical had not lurked beneath the truant father's voice—if beneath the chaotic emotions had not been a "something" gently sardonic. It had not been sarcasm—no. The other had spoken truly from his heart. And yet—

The minister heard the night train plainly when it stopped for passengers at the station three blocks eastward. He listened to its puffing as it pulled again out of Paris, the sound of its increasing speed finally dying away down the river. He thought of the man who had gone out on that train, a man without a home, without the love of the children he had brought into the world, a man with nothing ahead of him but to wander on and on—

The minister wondered if he should have detained the prodigal until the return of his wife, Bella. He finally decided the father had suffered enough. After all, duty was the thing. Life was grim at times, yet it was always balanced and equitable. He would remind Sam Hod about it next day; but it was some days later that he did this, and told us of the extraordinary interview with Rannard Boltman which I have endeavored to reconstruct for you.

For he was called to Foxboro next day to attend a former parishioner who was slowly quitting this vale of tears. It was evening before he returned to Paris. On his way up to the parsonage he stopped in at Joe Service's news-room and bought the night's issue of the *Telegraph*. Standing by the door, he glanced over the front page, where the following caught his eye at once:

"RANNARD BOLTMAN RETURNS

"An unexpected visitor in town last evening was Rannard Boltman, a former resident. Mr. Boltman, who formerly conducted the wheelbarrow factory out on Beach Street extension, has been making his home the past few years in Shimoboshi, Japan, where he has held a responsible position as agent for a firm of New York exporters. Business

decreed that he should spend but a few hours in the village, as he has to catch an early boat out of San Francisco next week for a return to the Orient.

"Mr. Boltman missed visiting his wife, Mrs. Bella Boltman, as she was absent in Montpelier. But a note left for her, with Miss Tessie Wilsing, maid in the Boltman home, conveyed the intelligence that her daughter Barbara will not marry Mr. Lynn Gates, son of the popular local minister, as had been supposed. Miss Barbara was seen

to board the train with her father last night, and the note announced that she will sail with him from San Francisco on the twenty-third to remain in Japan for an indefinite stay.

"Mrs. Bella Boltman is still in Montpelier, it is understood, though she could not be reached by telephone up to going to press. She went there Wednesday to attend a suffrage convention. Her address on 'Happier Homes for the Working Classes' was copied extensively in the State papers last evening."

MATED

(Continued from page 59)

"All well here except the old car, who has been weeping steadily in her radiator ever since you left. And I've got some good news for you, which I was going to keep, until you get back. But I'm weak-minded. Do you know what's happened to the Green-room Club? We cleared nearly a thousand dollars with 'The Virginian' show, and Sam Prentiss has come across with enough more so that we can rent a big room in the Harbinger Building and have a regular club!

"That's pretty good, isn't it? But now I want you to cross your heart on something perfectly tremendous. Your old daddy has had a chance to become a regular actor. Sam Prentiss is to blame for that too. The second night we gave 'The Virginian' he brought a representative of Ben Irish down from Chicago. I didn't know anything about it, but last week this man, who stuns you with the name of Deifenderfer, came into the office and offered me a job with a road company. It was a terrible temptation, Cinders, because he had a heavy villain part for me.

"But of course I'm a tobacco broker, and art is art. Just the same, it tickles us a little, doesn't it, to know that Daddy could, if he would!

"Cinders, it makes me feel dreadfully to think of how you had to learn about everything. Putting things off has always been my vice; if I could ever have learned to do the right thing in the right place, your mother and you would have what's coming to you by now. I spend a lot of time hoping you'll get used to your new home. I think you'll find your father very kind. There's something about him that reminds me a little of you—"

Lucinda didn't like that. Since her arrival Mr. Weaver—she hadn't learned to call him Father—had spoken hardly a word to her. She forced back the tears of resentment and homesickness and read Daddy's last lines:

"I'm counting the days till you come back to us, Cinders. It's awfully empty and quiet up in your corner. And if things don't go all right with you in Montclair, I want you to do something for me! I want you to wire me, or write, and I won't waste a minute getting you away.

"Daddy."

There were two ten-dollar bills in the envelope. They were folded in a paper band labeled "In Case of" in Daddy's small, square hand.

How easy it would have been for her to write and say that things were not all right with her. But some pride in herself or consideration for Daddy withheld the truth and caused her to answer in a light vein to the effect that Montclair was very beautiful, the Weavers kind and Eddie an amusing little playmate.

She had no specific reason for complaining of the Weavers' unkindness, except that her inclusion in their household might have been interpreted as an act of continued cruelty. She objected mainly to Eddie and to the cocktails. But after a time she began to enjoy her share in the cocktails; Stanton,

the butler, walked out of the pantry one afternoon, and it was rather fun to be taught by the amusing Nookie, who showed her how to put in two jiggers of gin to one of vermouth, how to douse in a few drops of absinthe, how to fill it up with cracked ice and screw on the patent top. The shaking of it made the hands tingle, and it was exciting to watch the rim of frost forming around the edge of the big silvery cup.

"What ho, the barkeep!" Nookie would sing out, proud of his pupil, when she came in with a full shaker and empty glasses on a tray. Rounds of applause.

Lucinda didn't write to Daddy about that; she knew he would be worried, just the way he was worried about the cigarettes and the movies. She fell in with the cocktail idea; being a child, hence imitative, she shook them with a will. A new butler arrived, but in three days he had quarreled and gone his way. Others came, saw, departed. Mrs. Weaver seldom kept a servant very long. During the intervals Lucinda was useful "as a barkeep," according to Nookie. The Weavers' guests preferred her drinks; she became featured as a comedienne as she passed through the room, a silver shaker in her hand. "Never did like Stanton's cocktails," Nookie would explain after his third or fourth. "Now, Cinderella here, she's got genuine talent. Reminds me slightly of the head barkeep at the Hoffman House."

One advantage of her new employment was that it kept her away from Eddie. He was never asked to the drawing-room, and for obvious reasons; Weaver detested him, and even at their noisiest parties Eddie would have been an anachronism. But Lucinda's reprieves from Eddie were short. She endured him for breakfast and dinner, the farcical French class and the afternoon session which Mrs. Weaver soothingly referred to as Playtime.

IN pursuance of her social program—for it appeared that she had a social program—Mrs. Weaver gave her stepdaughter a garden party to which a great number of little Spiegels and McCanns and what-not from the outer edge of Montclair came with gifts, appetites and elaborate costumes. Somewhat against her will, Lucinda was arrayed in fluffly pink and carried an enormous shepherd's staff, adorned with a pink bow. She was, Mrs. Weaver informed her, Little Bo Peep, complementary to Eddie in azure velvet, who came as Little Boy Blue.

Mrs. Weaver had spent a great deal of money. She told how much in no uncertain terms to a company of proud parents, sipping juleps on the rear veranda. There was a gilded Maypole on the lawn, and a red plush booth wherein a hired entertainer from New York did magic. He could pass a water-glass smoothly through the bottom of another water-glass; he could pull the flags of all nations out of a hole in his finger-ring; he could flip the ace of spades into the air and make it come back the jack of diamonds.

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young ladees and gen-tlemen, pay clo-o-ose attention!" And he might have gone very far with a bowl of goldfish and a spool of thread had not his booth come suddenly down over his head, a mess of red plush, flopping goldfish, screams and twisting limbs. And out of the confusion, of course, came Eddie, hooting triumphantly: "Fake! Fake! The guy's a fake. He's got a coupla ropes tied to his feet. Fake! Git the hook!"

Caterers removed the booth, the goldfish and the sorcerer, the latter threatening suit until Mr. Weaver appeared and offered to double his pay. Then the party went on, everybody gorging himself with ice-cream and cake, with the exception of Eddie. Eddie had been given a particularly annoying weapon, a popgun arrangement and a set of arrows with adhesive rubber cups on the ends, which would stick where they hit.

"If you don't put that thing away," threatened Mr. Weaver, who had just fed the sorcerer and was beginning to look very red in the face, "I'll take you out and wring your neck."

"Fairchild!" warned Mrs. Weaver from the porch.

"Yaw!" jubilated Eddie, and escaped into a hedge.

Shortly afterward the guests were treated to a bombardment. The youngest Spiegel girl, who was lifting a large spoonful of ice-cream to her lips, saw the spoon fly wonderfully across the lawn. "Yaw!" cried Eddie from ambush, and a second arrow whizzed across the table. It stuck, quivering, on the bole of a tree, Lucinda having dodged. Then it dawned upon her that the arrows were intended for her and not for the miscellaneous Spiegels and McCanns.

THE effect upon her was surprising, to her most of all. She sprang up from the table and made straight for the hedge where Eddie was huddled among the leaves, fussing with the lock of his new gun, which had jammed. When she was less than three yards away from him the jam was corrected and he raised the muzzle to a line straight with her eyebrows.

"You horrid, nasty little devil!" said Lucinda, her voice quiet, her heart pounding. "If you shoot that thing again, I'm going to slap your face."

"Yaw!" said Eddie, and with a dull thup the arrow flew and caught her accurately in the center of her forehead. It didn't hurt much; but as it stuck there, held fast by the rubber sucker on the end, the picture was so horrifying as to set several little McCanns and Spiegels howling. Lucinda made straight for the spot where Eddie Weaver crouched in the hedge. She was taller than he by a hand's-breadth, and this gave her an advantage. It was a shocking scene for a lawn-party: Little Bo Peep, an arrow sticking from her head, swinging lustily, right and left, upon the kicking, squirming person of Little Boy Blue.

She got him down and stood, weak and panting, regarding her victim as he lay on the grass and bawled for his mother. Hurrying feet came from the veranda. Eddie sat up and relieved his mind.

"Ya butt-in! Ya poor sponge! Ya come spongin' on Momma cause she's got the money. I've gotcher number, baby! Yaw! And I know what yer here for. Yer momma wants ya outa the way while she gits a divorce. Momma! Momma! She hurt me awful. She tried to kill me. . . . Momma!"

Mrs. Weaver was there by that time, and Mr. Weaver and the helpful Mr. McCann, who was inclined to look upon it as a sporting opportunity.

"Lucinda," said Mrs. Weaver in her full, rich society voice, "do you think this is quite the thing to do? What will all your little friends say? Come, Eddie. I'll take you to Mademoiselle."

Lucinda wrote to Daddy that night, after the Weavers had gone out and Eddie had screamed himself to sleep. Of the affair on the lawn she merely stated that Mrs. Weaver had given a lovely party, and as substantiation inclosed the following clipping from a New York daily's Suburban Society Notes: "Miss Lucinda Shelby Weaver was the guest of honor of a garden party given for her by her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Fairchild Weaver of Copley Road, Upper Montclair. Miss Weaver is now with her parents, after an extended visit in the South."

Chapter Eleven

OFTEN Lucinda would sit unobserved, studying Mr. Weaver's plump, smooth, knowing face, and she would say to herself: "He can't be my father. They're all fooling me, and the day will come when they'll tell me it isn't so, that it's all been a game. He doesn't act like my father; he doesn't look like my father. No, he can't be." Then she would remember how Daddy, in his first letter after her arrival in Montclair, had referred to him as "your father." This puzzled her still more. Daddy wouldn't fool her that way. But how could it be so?

Fairchild Weaver, his hands casually in his pockets, strolled into her room one evening. He wore a dinner jacket, a tall winged collar, and a pleated shirt as soft as lace. As he entered, Lucinda got to her feet, folding the letter she had been reading; she was much excited because Daddy was coming to a Tobacco Growers' Convention in New York, would be at the Waldorf that very night and would come out to see her on the morrow!

Mr. Weaver stood smiling in the doorway, the polish of his smoothly brushed hair giving him the appearance of a well-groomed domestic animal. His handsome brown eyes looked kinder than usual.

"Well, Lucinda," he began, taking a chair, "you do look cozy—might have been here all your life."

"Yes sir," agreed Lucinda weakly. She did not fear him. There was nothing in Mr. Weaver to inspire alarm. He merely puzzled her, like a piece of machinery out of place with no socket into which it could be fitted.

"And how do you get along with Mademoiselle?" he asked breezily.

"All right—very well, thank you." She was still regarding him with wide, dark eyes; his eyes too were wide and dark. She remembered what Great Aunt Cornelia had said about "eyes like your father's."

"She's a crusty old thing," he laughed pleasantly. "If she hadn't been, I guess Eddie would have killed her long ago."

He talked lightly on about sending her to a dancing-class and entering her at Miss Fickner's school in the fall. And how did she like the prettiest McCann girl, who came to her party? And he shouldn't wonder if they would have time soon to take her and Eddie to New York for a matinee. To all this Lucinda's replies had been stereotyped. She was watching him hungrily.

"Tell me, is it true," she asked finally in a perfectly clear voice, "is it true that you're my father?"

"Why, yes, my dear." His face was positively merry, but his dark eyes seemed to grow opaque. "What in the world makes you ask that?"

"Everybody says you are," she mused. "Even Daddy says so. But some way you don't seem—like it."

"Well, now!" The idea seemed to amuse him as he stretched out his plump legs and reached for his cigarette-case. "You're a strange child, Lucinda. Just what do you require in a father?"

"I don't know." She shook her distracted head. "I don't seem to love you the way fathers ought to be loved. It's not your

fault, Mr.—sir. You seem to be very nice and everything. But I just don't."

"Young ladies often say that to young gentlemen," he tittered nervously, and drew his legs back again. "But I'm sure when you get used to me—"

"Fairchild!" Mrs. Weaver's voice, pitched to its strident domestic key, shrilled distantly. "Fairchild!"

"Yes, Orla!" He came awkwardly to his feet.

"Our guests are here, and what are you doing? For mercy's sake! Hurry up, and bring Lucinda down with you. They'll want cocktails right away."

"Can't Burroughs make cocktails?" ventured Lucinda. Burroughs was their latest.

"Yes," said Weaver. "But it is much more amusing to have you do it. And yours are much better. Come!"

When she came downstairs with her unrecognized father, she found other gentlemen in lacy pleated shirt-fronts and several ladies with creaking stays and pink nudeness rippling over their generous décolletage. There were the McCanns and the Spiegels and Nookie, also many whom she had never seen before. Mr. Weaver kissed all the ladies on sight, and Mrs. Weaver did as much for the gentlemen; kissing was a commonplace social rite in their circle. Then Nookie began clamoring for his cocktail. When Burroughs announced that everything was ready, he followed Lucinda to the pantry, where the ingredients, as the late Stanton used to call them, were laid out carefully by the sink.

She counted noses carefully. There were ten, including the Weavers. They would call for two apiece and a "dividend"—meaning another drink all round. With a pride born of much praise, Lucinda measured out the jiggers of gin and the jiggers of vermouth until the huge shaker was three-quarters full. How queer it smelled! Like many another bartender, she had never tasted her own poison. But a sudden temptation jogged her elbow, prodding her to pour a half glassful of the brownish liquid and raise it to her lips. . . . Pah! Her tongue was on fire. She spat disgustedly into the sink.

LUCINDA was a very busy child that evening. Mrs. Weaver was having a birthday. The shaker had been emptied once and refilled, before the party, shrieking at jokes that never seemed to reach a point, went strolling away toward the dining-room. Mrs. Weaver, having entirely forgot her English accent, cackled like a parrot, something about, "Jimmy and I know something. You bet we know something." Fairchild Weaver had his arm around the very blonde Mrs. McCann and was leading her toward the feast. Mr. McCann swung pompously behind, a charred cigar sticking in his long face, deep as though it had been hammered there.

Lucinda went quietly back to her room, where she undressed and sat at her writing desk to read over Daddy's letter. It was short and typewritten. He would be in New York for the Tobacco Growers' Convention the week of the eleventh. He would be at the Waldorf. He would come to see her. He must be there now! she thought excitedly. She wondered if he would telephone. Maybe Mrs. Weaver wouldn't let him talk. But he'd come to her somehow. Daddy always kept his word. Just the way he promised her the hope-chest. She wondered just how much to tell him, for she knew it would worry Daddy a great deal to think of her as unhappy in her other home. She wouldn't tell him that the hope-chest was in the attic; he might be hurt. He wouldn't insist on her telling more than she cared to; Daddy never did. But would he guess? Would he guess that she was torn with homesickness, with loathing of

her foster-brother, with distaste for these people who did nothing but boast of their possessions and reach for another drink?

Very near to crying, she tucked herself into bed, turned out the lights and gave herself over to wistful thoughts. Mr. Weaver had thought it funny when she asked him if he were really her father. Of course he was! He had eyes exactly like hers, as Great Aunt Cornelia had said. But how could anybody have a father and not feel it? Daddy felt like that.

"WELL, asleep on the job!" Lucinda blinked around a brilliantly lighted room. Nookie, his long teeth showing terribly, his face gray and lifeless, was leaning over her, shaking her by the arm. She shrank away from him, and saw Mrs. Weaver, very red, very pop-eyed, simpering in the doorway.

"Asleep on the job!" repeated Nookie, and his musty breath smote her. "I ask you, bartender, is this any way to behave at a birthday party?"

"She's tired, poor dearie," lamented Mrs. Weaver, steadying herself against the door-frame.

"We're all of us tired," insisted Nookie. "It's been a hard night on the graveyard shift. And there aint one of us strong enough to shake up a drink the way little Lucinda can do it."

Lucinda looked blankly from the man leaning over her, to her stepmother in the door. What did they want of her, here in the middle of the night?

"Let Burroughs do it, please," she pleaded. "Burroughs has gone to bed," announced Orla, who always let her servants bully her until she had to dismiss them or they left in disgust.

"Come right down, dearie," coaxed Nookie. "Yes, dearie, come right down," echoed Mrs. Weaver, taking on an air of sublime dignity.

"Down?" asked Lucinda. "Down where?" "What is more down than downstairs?" inquired Nookie. "We need you, baby. Oh, how we need you to shake 'em up!"

"And be sure and dress carefully," pronounced Orla, suddenly prim.

Lucinda sat very still and watched them move away, arm in arm, along the narrow corridor. In the distance she could hear their discordant voices braying: "Take me down, down, down, where the Würzburger flows, flows, flows."

When the room was silent again, she arose and began methodically to dress. She took her time about it, selecting a tweed skirt and stout shoes; then from a corner closet she took out her sport coat and hat. She would have packed a bag, but the noises from the hall alarmed her. . . . At last she decided that it was only an echo of the riot below, but she was warned that her time was short. So she seized her purse out of a top drawer, jammed her little hat tightly over her curls and found her way through the sun-room, along the corridor leading to the servants' quarters and down the back stairs.

Chapter Twelve

"ISNT Mr. Shelby in yet?" This time the man at the desk was shorter than he had been at her other two approaches. He listened an instant at the telephone, then hung up the receiver and said with a smile fainter than before: "Not in."

The clock above a marble barricade of counters was pointing twenty minutes past one. What was keeping Daddy so long? He had said he would be at the Waldorf, and this was the Waldorf.

"But he's in Room Three-sixty-one," Lucinda paused to argue. The clerk smiled kindly, coldly and repeated: "Sorry. He's not in his room."



And then—the world welcomed and rewarded him

HE WAS always puzzling things out for himself, wondering intensely how and why. He seldom talked. People didn't know what was back of that screwed-up forehead till appeared small, throbbing paragraphs in the home paper—things that got hold of them and set them thinking, "Who's writing those?" Yet not until stories of the same poignant touch came out in magazines, over his name, did they recognize him as the writer . . . trained by the Palmer Institute of Authorship to write impressively what was in his mind and heart.

Then came the letters. "That's the first bit of fiction I've read for years that's made me actually cry." "Write more about Jerry." And from his favorite editor—"How you can write!"

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What should she do? Then the Tobacco Growers' Convention popped into her mind. Silly of her not to have thought of that before. She found a uniformed boy standing by a brass plate marked "Cashier," and when she asked him about the Convention, he pointed upward and spoke like a parrot: "Banquet hall, mezzanine floor."

A few people were lounging in Peacock Alley, but the hotel was darkening for the night as she came upon a stairway of *café au lait* marble and found her way to the mezzanine, and there she saw a great number of blue-jumpered porters piling up gold chairs. A great room yawned beyond, a room with bulging balconies, a ceiling painted with flying women, a rostrum draped with an American flag. It was empty, save for a few porters.

"Where is the banquet hall?" she asked shakily of the nearest one, who looked good-humored.

"Ye're lookin' it in the face, young lady," he replied with a grin.

"But I thought the Tobacco Growers' Convention was there," she insisted.

"It was," he replied. "But if ye want to make a speech, ye're too late. They busted up an hour ago."

The ensuing hour was spent between the visitors' desk and a large Italian chair by the Thirty-fourth Street entrance. She had a feeling that Daddy would come in through this door, and she kept bravely awake, her eyes glued on the swinging glass, revealing dissipated taxicabs, half-empty crosstown cars and a thinning crowd passing back and forth. Even in its early morning doze, New York looked powerful, vigilant, ready to reach out and crush her with its stone arms.

Again she appealed to the night clerk, who telephoned upstairs and shook his head. Three-sixty-one didn't answer. Something was keeping Daddy very late. She might have stayed there all night, because the chair was quite comfortable and she had no desire to sleep, but at last a fat lady in a white waist came up to her and asked with a sort of impertinent kindness: "Somebody you wanted to see, little girl?"

"I was waiting for Mr. Shelby," she responded, frightened by the woman's manner.

"Oh. He has a room here. But he isn't in. Is he your father, little girl?"

"Yes—er, no. But I have to see him."

"Maybe you'd better come again in the morning," suggested the woman, and her air was official. Possibly she owned the hotel. Had Lucinda chosen to be frank, she might have found a way of staying there all night, even of getting a room for herself. But the stout woman was waiting, and how could Lucinda tell her that she had run away from her own father's house in Montclair to see a man who wasn't even related to her by blood?

LUCINDA'S interminable walk that night was all a maze to her. She knew Fifth Avenue, of course, by the pictures she had seen of it and what Daddy had told her after his visits to New York. It looked handsome, square and looming in the false electric night. In the monstrous city's argus calm, sleeping with its eyes half-open, the street gave the appearance of something suddenly deserted because of a cry of plague or invasion. Richly draped silk curtains were drawn in most of the show-windows, but through the chinks she could peep in at displays of furs, frocks, pictures, furniture. The richness and the silence heightened the illusion of sudden escape from a royal fair, its treasures left to the mercy of any casual looter. The policemen's wooden watch-towers were deserted. In the distance an elevated train bayed like a dragon; then around a corner came a group of heavy-shouldered men, tugging at a gigantic snake-thing which hissed and vomited froth along the curb; Lucinda saw that they were street-

cleaners swabbing down the asphalt. But a chill depression was coming over her with a rising wind. . . . A scattered few human beings shuffled by her. Some of them walked slantingly. . . .

Then she began to enjoy it. She had always wanted to see Fifth Avenue—to think that her first sight of it would be like this, at three in the morning, with all New York asleep except an occasional sinister taxicab scuttling by! She wandered from window to window, beginning to think of the great street as her own, an Aladdin's garden in which she could pick and choose as her fancy willed. For a long time she stopped before an art-dealer's, admiring the portrait of a lady with powdered hair and a picture hat who sat teasingly, a bunch of cherries before her red lips. The window was lined with crimson velvet. . . . A few doors beyond, she came upon a display of furs, soft, nut-colored sables, and ermines like drifted snow. . . . She recognized the Public Library. The lions in front weren't so tall as she thought they would be, from Daddy's description. . . . Her feet were growing very tired, and the scream of a fire engine, bolting down Forty-second Street, scared her.

Tired of shop-windows and of architecture, Lucinda plodded on and on, only hoping for a place where she could sit down, or better still, curl up and rest her heavy head. She came to a beautiful lean cathedral whose spire seemed to scrape the moonlit clouds, and sat for an instant on its steps, but the sound of approaching feet caused her to scamper lamely up and trudge on. At last she was confronted by the statue of a tall golden soldier on a tall golden horse; his cloak was blowing, his head thrown back, and with the gibbous moon upon his forehead, he looked as if he were about to spring forth, shouting a command. This was the entrance to a park, and she thought of going in and cuddling up under one of the trees, but a policeman came out of the shadows and asked: "What can I do for you, sister?"

"Nothing, thank you," she said, and walked away.

Turning into a side-street a block beyond, she saw a surface car grinding along on its flat wheels. Her one purpose as she hailed it was to find a place to sit. How good the hard bench felt, and how she wanted to lie full length and go to sleep! The only passenger, she might easily have taken her nap had not the conductor, a stunted man with a dirty weasel face, chosen to make himself agreeable.

"Pretty late time o' night for you to be out in, girly," he ventured, taking her fare. "Guess yer momma'll be lookin' for you aw right."

"I'm meeting a train," she extemporized.

"Gran' Central?" he suggested.

"Yes," she said, and turned to look out of the window.

Arousing from her doze, she found that the car had bumped to a stop, and the conductor was chanting something about Gran' Central and stepping lively.

THE stony façade of the Grand Central station brought a simple inspiration to her sluggish mind. Railway stations were always full of waiting-rooms and large, luxurious benches. In such a place one might stay forever, and if disturbed, could murmur something about a train. Lucinda went inside and stopped at the first waiting-room she saw. The benches were almost empty, and she chose the one farthest from the entrance. . . .

A clock at the end of the room was pointing half-past six when she opened her eyes and looked around. She had a little difficulty at first in remembering how she had got there, but when she shook the ache from her joints, her first thought was that

half-past six would be hours too early to awaken Daddy. She was hungry, achingly, gnawingly hungry. Also she had a feeling that her hair was like a rat's nest and her costume a mass of creases. In the ladies' dressing-room she rented soap, towel and a comb, and with these made herself presentable, tidying her hair, rubbing away the creases from her cheeks; her reflection in the glass looked back bright and young, as if she had slept in a down bed, bathed in a porcelain tub and been dressed by Mrs. Weaver's high-priced personal maid.

Across the waiting-room, already crowded with early passengers, a sign announced a restaurant, but it turned out to be an enormous oval lunch-counter with several colored waiters inside the inclosure, passing out food to hastily gourmandizing passengers. It was easy enough to climb up on a stool and to feel that the relics of Daddy's twenty dollars would take her anywhere—except to a bed. But when a waiter, having banged a plate of toast, a bowl of sugar and a bottle of catsup before the customer next to her, pressed a menu card under her nose and dropped a handful of table silver, the affair didn't seem so simple.

"Yes ma'am," said he briskly, pointing out grapefruit on the menu with a blue thumb-nail.

"Well, I'll take that, and some—" But he was gone. Shyly she looked toward the place on her left, and saw what might have been either a very old boy or a very young man stuffing sausages into his amiable mouth with the greatest enthusiasm. He was very old, she decided; he must have been at least sixteen. He had nice brown hair, that curled slightly, and his eyes were clear blue like Daddy's. There was a queer break in one of his eyebrows, as if it had been split in two and carelessly sewed up again. Maybe he had sewed it himself. A boy would do it like that.

"Say!" He stopped chewing and looked at her. She was neither frightened nor embarrassed, because his smile was so friendly. "Say, if you want something good, try these sausages with scrambled eggs."

"Thanks," she said, gazing enviously at his depleted plate. "They do look good."

"And they're grand with a cup of coffee—but I'll bet your mother doesn't let you have coffee."

"Yes, she does—sometimes," replied Lucinda haughtily. She wasn't going to let him treat her like a little girl. After all, he wasn't more than two or three years older than she. Listen to the way his voice cracked! He was a well-mannered boy, she thought, for as soon as he began talking, he took off his straw hat with the red and green ribbon.

"Look here, Charley," he demanded pleasantly of the waiter, who was arriving with a half grapefruit, "this young lady wants sausages and scrambled eggs, just like mine, understand. And bring her a cup of coffee."

"Yessa."

The waiter turned his back, and Lucinda, spooning ravenously at her grapefruit, found room enough in her mouth to thank him and to admit that sausages and scrambled eggs were just what she wanted. She liked the boy. He had offered her the first friendship she had encountered since she slunk down the back stairs at Montclair. She liked his clothes; they didn't look expensive, but he wore them well. He had the appearance of a young man going somewhere, into adventures with what her mother would have called "nice people." Perhaps it was a reaction against Eddie which caused her to approve so unreservedly.

"Of course," he was going on protectively, "I wouldn't eat that sort of food as a regular thing. But when you're traveling I think it's a good thing to put something substantial under your belt."

"It would be sort of rich as a regular

thing," agreed Lucinda, making havoc with her plateful.

"There's an awful lot of bunk about food," he said sagely, jamming his fist under his chin and resting his elbow on the counter. His eyes had become pleasantly argumentative. He developed a slight stammer which seemed to go with his broken eyebrow. "If you're leading a s-sedentary life, f'rinstance, you d-don't burn up very many calories."

"Oh, don't you?" asked Lucinda, her mouth full of delicious calories.

"Of course you don't." His fist went deeper into his chin. "But people who exercise the w-way we're doing, we burn up a lot of fat and sugar. D'you see?"

Lucinda thought so. She had been eating very rapidly.

"Have you got to travel far today?" he asked. It didn't seem impertinent—just the question of one good sportsman to another.

"Well, I may have to," she began bravely enough, then commenced to flounder. "I'm expecting somebody—I—how far are you going?"

"To Canada. My dad's got a rich patient who blows me to a fishing trip up there every summer. He's a nice old fusser—s-said last year I was too young to travel around in a canoe—can you beat that? I was going to start up yesterday, but I stayed over last night to go to a show."

"I stayed over, too," she admitted, and something urged her to take him into her confidence. She wanted to ask his advice about getting to the Waldorf and Daddy. But her mouth opened dryly and she had a queer feeling in her stomach. Possibly it was the result of last night. More likely it was sausages and strong coffee.

"Don't you think," said the strange boy, leaning on his elbow,—apparently he had plenty of time to argue,—"that you get a lot more pleasure out of a trip if you have a s-serious purpose?"

LUCINDA hadn't considered that, but she did her best by asking: "And what's your serious purpose?"

"Collecting," he announced. "I'm specializing on beetles. I'm taking my outfit along, and I expect to get a lot of new varieties in Canada." This with the air of a daring explorer, equipped for a scientific expedition in the wilds. "Did you ever collect anything?"

"No," faltered she. Then, in a panicky fear that she would be late and Daddy wouldn't be in his room when she returned: "I—I'm not going anywhere—I mean I'm not waiting for any train. I think I'll have to go now, thank you."

"Go where?" In his big-brotherly attitude he looked puzzled.

"Well, you see my daddy's at the Waldorf, and he wasn't there when I came to town, and I waited for him and he didn't come in—"

"You mean you've been waiting all night?" He had guessed it. Lucinda merely nodded.

"What did you do that for? Why didn't you get a room and go to bed?"

"I don't know." She was ashamed to tell him that she had been frightened and confused, that she didn't exactly know how to go about it to get a room and go to bed.

"You could have just told the Waldorf people that you were stopping with your father—"

"But he isn't—" She got no farther, and to the boy's credit, he did not pursue the subject.

"Check!" he called manfully, and when the slip was passed across the counter, he covered it with a limp five-dollar bill which came solitary from his pocket.

"Here, let me pay my share," she protested.

"We'll fix that up later," he decided.



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"And now look here. I've got plenty of time. We'll get in a taxi and go hunt up your daddy."

"BUT you'll miss your train," she said. They were seated in a taxicab and bumping toward Fifth Avenue.

"What's the difference?" asked her deliverer. "I've missed two already. But say, don't you think it's sort of risky, butting into town this way, all alone, staying up all night?"

"Well—" She wondered an instant how much to tell him, then burst out again: "Well, I was in Montclair, staying with some people I didn't like. And I knew my daddy was at the Waldorf. I had to come."

"So you just marched around town?" he asked, sympathetic this time.

"And I slept for a while in the waiting-room."

"Bet it was fun!" he smiled eagerly. "I tried running away once when I was about your age." That stung her. "A cop recognized me and shipped me back. Hello, here we are."

They had stopped at the Waldorf; whereupon the young man paid the taxi-driver; as he counted out the fare, he had some trouble finding the money. She had an impression that there was no more in his pocket.

"Well, I'm ever so grateful to you. I—" Lucinda hesitated on the curb, her hand held out.

"Oh, don't let's quit yet," he insisted. "I'm going to stick around till your dad shows up. Suppose he's been called out of town or something?"

They went over to the visitors' desk and wrote out a card for Room 361. During the wait she again had a guilty feeling about his missing his train.

"What will your father's patient say?" she asked timidly.

"He's getting used to me," said the boy-man with his most mature air.

"Well, I don't know what I should have done if I hadn't found you," she told him, her large dark eyes admiring his candid blue ones.

"I hope I didn't most kill you with that coffee and those sausages," he said. Then on an impulse: "My n-name's Cole—Martin W. Cole."

"Three-sixty-one wants you to go up," declared the uniformed boy, having slipped another card out of a brass trumpet.

"Oh, it's Daddy!" she sighed, and her voluntary escort took her to the elevator, gave the number to the man and held out his hand.

"Good luck!" he cried, and was off for his train.

As she mounted upward toward Daddy and protection, her joy was dimmed by one remorseful thought. She hadn't thanked Martin W. Cole sufficiently, and she ought to have told him her name.

Chapter Thirteen

IT should have been an enchanting journey, that trip with Daddy all the way from New York to their Southern city. But there was an effort in his kindness; he joked with the air of a man laughing against time, and his hilarity was not sustained as it used to be. He had changed. Something was gnawing at his mind.

The train had no sooner ceased its roaring through the Hudson Tube and stretched out for its race through New Jersey, than she sensed a difference. At first she thought that she had offended him by her unconventional return from Montclair, but his affectionate pat reassured her, and he said: "You did exactly right, Cinders. Those Weavers are a bad lot. I'm mighty sorry about last night, though. I had a date with a manager

—you know those theatrical people sit up all night." Then his eyes went off into space, gazing at the secret worry that was troubling him.

He was full of sprightly gossip of the home town and of comic little anecdotes. He told how Professor Grigsby had called on Miss Phoebe Pendleton, and how the Pendletons' colored butler had reported to Mrs. Pendleton: "Ah don' know what they're doin' down there, Miss. Ah reckon they're prayin'." Yes, Daddy was very jolly that trip—jolly in spots, jerkily gay. He did his clumsy best to make her comfortable. When the man with the magazines came by, Daddy piled her seat with them. He got off at Cleveland and bought the wine-colored apples which she approved. In the dining-car he insisted upon her taking two helpings of chocolate ice-cream. She was sure he was glad that she had come back. But what had changed him, clouded him so in the months of her absence?

When she was reading, she would glance from her magazine to watch him, reading too, in the seat across from hers. His eyes weren't on the print. They were wandering away again, searching out that invisible worry.

THEY were on time at the Page Street station, and with the same gay, absent, secretive air, Ike Shelby gave assistance to the girl who should have been his daughter. He gathered up her handbag with his, hailed a taxicab, helped her in. In a hurried glimpse Lucinda had a happy, heart-wrenching view of familiar streets: an ugly gray brick house at a corner with the rear staircase exposed; a whitewashed alley with "Lanko the Dry Cleaner" swaying on a board; a black placard in front of the First Methodist Church, announcing a revival. Well-remembered objects spoke to her.

"It's wonderful to be back," she whispered, her eyes filling.

"I'm glad," said Daddy, but his voice sounded dry.

As they swung into Cynthea Court, she gazed out in wonder, surprised that nothing had changed. She had been away so long, she thought. But the same collection of rockers cluttered Judge Brady's sidewalk; the same red chalk-marks were on the flagstones where the children played. Coming eagerly up the steps toward the Shelbys' brick front, she noticed that a shade, half-drawn in the bay window, was ripping loose at the edge. Nothing had changed.

"I'll leave you here, Cinders." She turned and saw Daddy holding out the little new traveling bag he had bought for her.

"Why, Daddy! You're not coming in? You're not—"

"Got to run right over to the office," he explained awkwardly, and his eyes were clouded again.

"But you're just home. Wont Mother—"

"Oh, that's all right, Cinders," he called out with nervous cheerfulness. Then hesitating: "I don't think she'll be expecting me. You just go in. That's all right."

Then he kissed her suddenly and bounded back to his taxicab. . . .

Juba Henry opened the door for her, started dramatically and prayed aloud.

"Where's Mother?" asked Lucinda breathlessly.

"Lawd, chile, ef it aint you! You Maw's up in huh room, I reckon—"

Lucinda took the stairs two steps at a time and found her mother, dressed for the street, standing on the first landing.

"Lucinda!" she cried, and her look was not welcoming. "Where in the world did you come from?"

"Mother!" The girl threw herself into Matala's arms. "I had to come! I couldn't stand it a minute longer! Mother, if you only knew—I had to—"

Matalea held her daughter stiffly for an instant.

"Come into my room," she commanded, and when the door was closed: "You were to stay six months. You've been only three—"

"I know it." The girl's high heart sank at her mother's manner. "I couldn't stay with the Weavers. They were horrid. Eddie was horrid. They drank and carried on all night."

Matalea surveyed her, and there was no friendliness in her eyes when she said: "You've come home at a bad time. We're breaking up housekeeping."

"Why?" The answer was apparent almost before it came.

"Like and I have decided to separate."

"Separate?"

"I've endured a little too much from him." Her voice became acid. "There's no good in our going on with it any longer. I've borne the last straw I can carry."

"But, Mother—what are we going to do?" Lucinda had sunk on a corner of the bed, for her knees were giving under her.

"We're going to Philadelphia next week," declared Matalea in a decisive and relentless tone.

To Philadelphia. That was where Mr. Nash lived. Less than thirteen years old, the child was beginning to understand. "And if I'd stayed home," she thought, "this wouldn't ever have happened."

(Even more illuminating are the events by which life now molds the lovable Lucinda; and you will find the ensuing chapters of Mr. Irwin's impressive and very modern novel—in the next, the August, issue—of consistently mounting interest.)

THE JUNGLE WOMAN

(Continued from page 71)

law, arrived again at their crude little clubhouse on the morning of June 12th. Even before he got his tackle ready, the impatient Wardlaw suggested:

"Bob, we'll try 'em this afternoon at Dead Willows."

"Sure," his partner bantered him. "You're itching to pass by Friley's?"

"Well,"—the old fellow looked sheepish,— "we might see something."

On its way to Dead Willows, their boat passed Friley's about four-thirty. From the river below, gazing upward with both eyes, neither of them could detect a sign of life. Through every opening in the brushwood they squinted at a sway-backed roof and mud-chinked logs, but saw no woman, heard no sound. The whole afternoon was disappointing. At Dead Willows every perch refused to bite, and the fishermen were about ready to give up, when Ruston turned and pointed.

"Look, Judge! Yonder's a fire."

"Yes, yes!" Old Wardlaw jumped at the pretext. "It's Friley's cabin. We'd better go and see about it."

The blaze did not seem big enough to be a house, and grew no larger. For perhaps twenty minutes they watched it, burning steadily at one place, then heard shots, five or six, in rapid succession, such as could not have come from a rifle, certainly not from the same rifle.

"Pistols!" Wardlaw glanced at his watch. "Eleven minutes past six. Hurry, Bob." And their motorboat headed for home. When they came abreast of the obliterated landing-place at Friley's, nothing unusual could be seen, except for a glow against the cabin.

"Stop, Bob," the Judge insisted. "I'll go up there. That woman may be in trouble."

From long association, Bob Ruston had more gumption than to argue when the Judge's mind was set. So he ran the boat ashore and waited, while old Wardlaw went



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been dancing
in Cinderella's glass slippers?
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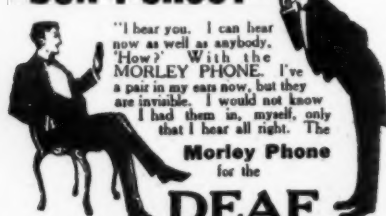
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scrambling up the steep ascent and halted, puffing, at the top.

"See anything, Judge?" his partner called.

"Not a human."

"Be careful. That shooting came from here."

"Hello! Hello!" Wardlaw shouted to the cabin, whose silence gave back the uncanny impression of emptiness—and tragedy. Sunshine flowed through the unvalled space between its rooms. Both doors stood ajar. A board shutter dangled on one hinge, like the broken wing of a fowl. Then Wardlaw noticed a suitcase beside the step, as if some one had but that instant set it down.

"Anybody at home?" he asked more hopefully, and ventured nearer, until he stood beside a fire which had almost burned out. There he saw crackling paper, charred bits of cloth, pieces of trunks, and sniffed the unmistakable odor of scorching furs. Beyond the fire the same clothesline was still stretched taut, but naked now as a telephone wire. From this denuded line Wardlaw glanced again to the fire, where he could detect the remains of a woman's wardrobe. Burned, all burned. Why had she destroyed those beautiful garments? Among the ashes lay the unconsumed heel of a slipper.

Stout-hearted as he was, the lawyer felt a vague uneasiness. Whoever fired those shots could not have traveled far, and common sense now warned old Wardlaw to be cautious. This was no affair of his; he'd better go back to the boat. And he had already turned to leave when his eye caught a glint of red, one single spark of fire against a gum tree, about the height of his shoulder. But when he took another step toward it, the steady gleam changed into many rays of reds and greens and blues, as sunlight is broken by a prism. Being a hard-headed country lawyer, Wardlaw's mind discredited what his eyes actually saw. He did not believe; yet there it was—a jeweled dagger pinning a scrap of paper to the tree. Prudence or no prudence, curiosity compelled him to examine the paper, posted like a public handbill. Naturally this phenomenon kept his eyes from the ground. He did not look where he was going, and had almost touched the dagger, when his foot struck something, something soft that lay huddled at the base of the tree.

IN that startled moment Bob Ruston, listening from their motorboat, heard his senior cry aloud: "Oh, Bob! Bob! Quick!"

The Judge was not given to hysteria. At his shout of alarm, Ruston snatched up their rifle and came bounding up the bank. Upon gaining the level, he looked everywhere without seeing his partner. Bob had heard no shot, no angry voices, nothing; yet some accident must have happened, for apparently Judge Wardlaw had fallen. Bob rushed to where the old lawyer was half-kneeling under a tree, beside another man. Never before had Bob seen the veteran's face look so awed as when he rose, saying:

"Too late, Bob. Dead as a herring."

"Who's dead? Who?"

"Don't know. Found him lying here."

The stranger's body was still warm, drilled through the chest, his right hand clutching a revolver. From a hazy description that they had of the stranger who had once been seen near Friley's, Wardlaw could not be sure that this was he. The dead man was not black-bearded, as rumor described that stranger, but recently shaven, and neatly dressed in gray tweeds, hands and linen fastidiously clean. The two lawyers stood gazing down upon him, when Bob unconsciously raised his eyes, saw the dagger and exclaimed:

"What's that, Judge? What's that?"

"Oh, that! I forgot."

In fact, his disconcerting stumble over a dead man had made Rufus Wardlaw forget the dagger and paper, which he had been

on the point of examining. Now both the partners stared at a scrap of paper, pinned to the tree by the dagger, and they needed no spectacles to read the single word it bore, "Lancy," written in a distinctive and most unforgettable hand. Stuck up there so boldly, it stared back at them with its challenge of defiance.

"Judge," the bewildered Bob inquired, "what does that mean?"

"Don't know. Here, Bob,"—Wardlaw gave his partner a push toward their boat,— "go to the nearest phone. Get the sheriff, with the coroner. Leave me that rifle— and send Hogue."

IN a land of resolute men Rufus Wardlaw was respected for his courage. As the motorboat went chugging away, he turned to do whatever might be done in the half-hour of daylight that yet remained.

Evidently the stranger had died in his tracks, had simply crumpled and sunk where he stood. Around the tree were no indications of a struggle. His wound, directly in front, showed that he had faced the enemy, and the revolver proved that he had not been taken unawares. Unquestionably the man had died fighting.

These were the first conclusions that flashed through Wardlaw's head; then another detail claimed attention. A bit of bark was chipped from the gum-tree just above the dagger—the scar of a bullet, and so freshly made that sap was still oozing.

A bullet had struck this gum. Where did it come from? Following his trained habit of observation, the criminal lawyer placed himself in what he imagined might have been the position of the dead man when fired upon. His experiment was simplified by the location of trees and shrubs in front, which left only three possible lanes along which two men could have been shooting at each other. One of these avenues was negated by the course of the projectile. The second led directly into the house, while the third seemed to end at a sassafras tree thirty paces distant. And there the Judge saw a new-made sign, about eight feet from the ground. Carefully he moved toward it, searching for tracks. A trampling of withered weeds made it apparent that some person had been standing beside the sassafras. And in the tree itself he found another ball imbedded. From the sassafras to the gum his logical eyes shifted back and forth. The path between was clear.

Except for the woman, whose disappearance and the burning of whose clothes he failed to fathom, Judge Wardlaw reasoned like this: The slayer was not an officer. To arrest a refugee in these swamps no sheriff dared come alone, and the local authorities would have been informed. Neither did it seem an act of backwoods vengeance; for in that case more likely the assassin would have fired from ambush. A sudden affray? Scarcely; it showed too much evidence of prearrangement.

"Looks like a duel," he thought, with a nod at the lowering sun. Half an hour ago, at eleven minutes past six, when Wardlaw heard the shots, the sun would have been shining almost at right angles across their theoretical line of fire, blinding neither combatant, giving neither the advantage of light.

"Yes, it must have been a duel," he had about decided when he heard a cautious voice from the river, calling:

"Lawyer? Oh, Lawyer!"

"Up here, Hogue. Come right up."

The long-haired fisherman appeared above the bluff, blue eyes alert and rifle ready.

"I'm here, Lawyer," he said. "Mr. Bob cotched me whilst I was takin' a nine-pound buffalo off the hook. But you's my lawyer, an' I'm 'bleeged to come if you sends for me."

"Thank you, Hogue. There isn't much to do until morning, only to keep people from meddling with this evidence, and wait until the sheriff gets here."

"What's happened, Lawyer?" Hogue squinted curiously about the place. "Been a killin'?"

"Yes. Yonder's the dead man, lying against that gum tree. Don't go tramping around him."

"I aint aimin' to go nigh him. Who killt him? His woman?"

Wardlaw could sometimes make a complicated lawsuit unravel itself in his mind, simply by pacing the floor and talking out the perplexity to his stenographer. So he sat down on a log beside Hogue, and the fisherman's eyes began to stare in amazement as Wardlaw narrated what he supposed had happened.

"But, Lawyer," Hogue objected, "you never seen it."

"No, I'm giving you what the physical facts seem to indicate."

"Didn't the woman have no hand in it?"

"Not sure. This is all guesswork. Tomorrow we'll find out."

Tomorrow, however, added little to their knowledge. A press telegram brought reporters, and detectives sent by newspapers. A vanishing lady with the trousseau of a queen, a mysterious Oriental dagger—it became front-page stuff. Motorboats went churning along the startled river—to Red Eric's logging camp, to old Barker's hut, to the seiners in Bobcat Slough, to everybody and every place where a trail might be picked up.

Star men from the press associations sifted the ashes of the fire, raked out bits of metal clasps, fragments of Paris buttons, the partly consumed heel of a Viennese slipper, brass bindings and the locks of two trunks.

But the most painstaking investigation revealed nothing that could be traced, nothing except that some unknown hand had taken great pains to conceal the woman's identity. A curio expert in New Orleans pronounced the dagger to be of ancient Hindu make. Its gems were genuine—sapphires, rubies, emeralds and pearls, worth several thousand dollars. There all efforts stopped. From about June twentieth, the mystery remained a blank until the night of October fourth.

THE first week in October! Whether old Wardlaw learned or failed to learn about the woman, whether the nations fought or kept peace, whether this republic prospered or went broke, the first week in October was his immutable time to go fishing. Tonight, October fourth, the fishing cronies were once more at their club—an uneventful night, without promise of excitement. Bob and the Judge had eaten supper. They sat upon the screened clubhouse porch, gazing at the river, and above the tree-tops toward Friley's.

"Bob," the old man grumbled, "I reckon we'll never know about that woman!"

It was not yet night, but dusk. Along the black, still water in front of them they noticed an indolent skiff slipping southward.

"Yonder goes Milton." Bob gave a nod of contempt at the venerable scamp who lived with his negro family in a fishing shack. Through their office, every month, this degraded creature received a check from one of the most prominent families in New York. Why? Who was he? Nobody knew. Peculiar people settled on Darkwater because no questions were asked; and they did fantastic things.

"Judge," Bob began a reminiscence, "do you remember one night, years ago, when that peculiar old crank Verland sat on these very steps and told us of the plot to assassinate Roosevelt? How did that old fellow invent such a fable?"

"Loneliness, Bob, loneliness." The Judge shook his head. "Brooding in the solitude.

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Men go batty. They imagine things—but what the devil became of that woman?"

All roads lead to Rome, and the partners went at it again, threshing over the same old straw, and getting nowhere, until a solitary dugout showed itself from around the bend.

"That's Hogue," said Bob. "He's coming here."

In the elusive half-light Hogue's dugout came creeping along the black water, and vanished under the lee of their bluff. Presently a chain rattled as he twisted it round a sapling. Then the fisherman himself came slouching up from the river.

"Howdy, gentlemen!" he drawled, letting the screen door slam as he entered the porch. "Glad to see you, Hogue," the Judge gave him cordial welcome. "Have a bite of supper?"

"No. Done et."

"Then sit down. Tell us all you know."

The tangle-bearded fisherman sat down, tilted back his chair, caught his heels on the rung, and scrouged up his knees into the same familiar attitude that he always assumed while fishing from his platform.

"Hogue," the Judge inquired pleasantly, "how long have you lived here?"

"Off an' on—a spell."

The three were grouped at a corner where the club porch turns. In the angle stood a solid table, covered with white cloth, on which a certain game was played whenever the members could muster a quorum. Above it swung an oil lamp beneath which old Wardlaw sat comfortably in his carpet slippers, fanning himself with the palmetto.

"Hogue," he asked, "did you ever glimpse any stranger coming around those people at Friley's? Or see anything that set you to thinking?"

FOR a meditative space Hogue continued to suck his pipe; then he removed it deliberately and parried one question with another: "Lawyer, they tells me that a man's own lawyer is bound to keep his mouth shut, aint he?"

It seemed a significant inquiry, coming from Hogue, who was not a person that gabbled. Both attorneys looked curiously at him, and in the fisherman's blue eyes caught a gleam of higher intelligence, far higher than common cunning. So Judge Wardlaw advised him with all seriousness: "That's the law, Hogue; the privilege of counsel protects anything that a client may confide to his attorneys."

"That's what I 'lowed. I didn't aim to be no witness, an' mebbe get bogged up deeper'n what I was."

"Then, Hogue, you do know something that we have overlooked?"

"Yep. Figgers that I do. You understand, Lawyer, when a feller sets an' tries to catch buffalo fish, he's got plenty time. He jes' watches the water jiggle up and down—and thinks, and thinks, and thinks. Lawyer, I've pondered so continual that I've got this business all doped out."

Bob Ruston shot one disgusted glance at his partner. Another crank gone mad with the heat, babbling of nightmares. Yet perhaps the fellow might know something, and Bob listened attentively when Hogue spoke again.

"Lawyer, I found one thing up there at Friley's."

"You discovered something," Wardlaw encouraged him, "while you were there with me?"

"No, Lawyer. I got there before you did—an' went back home."

"Before I got there? Why? You told me that you didn't know those people. What business did you have—"

At this rapid-fire cross-examination Hogue's beard shifted in the lamplight, and his blue eyes glinted.

"Lawyer," he announced positively, "I'm

goin' to tell this my way. An' mebbe you moughtn't believe me unless I had some proof. Here 'tis."

It was most unusual for Hogue to wear a coat, and as he fumbled in his pocket, both lawyers sat forward on the edges of their chairs, tingling with curiosity until he produced a small leather-bound volume.

"Here's my proof," he asserted. "Major Storcks wrote in here. He's the stranger that got kilt."

"Let me see it." Wardlaw's hand trembled as he reached for what appeared to be a diary; but Hogue held the book at arm's-length and refused to let the lawyer touch it. Instead, he himself opened the front page, and exhibited the inscription:

*Diary of Major John Arthur Cecil Storcks
Royal Bengal Regiment
1922*

TO the eyes of any lawyer this title page was a document which proved its own authenticity. Two pairs of greedy eyes devoured it; they could scarcely sit still while Hogue's fingers ran through its leaves, showing that the body of the diary was written partly by a man, partly by a woman.

"See for yourself." The fisherman pointed to these feminine entries. "She wrote too."

"She?" Both lawyers spoke together. "Who do you mean by she?"

"The lady—at Friley's."

"What? The woman?"

All three men sprang up at once, Hogue stepping backward and overturning his chair, for the other two seemed attempting to capture his diary by force.

"Stand clear!" he ordered. His eyes glittered, and his stooping shoulders straightened, half a head taller than one would have supposed, a powerful and resolute man. And his manner recalled Judge Wardlaw to his senses.

"Beg your pardon, Hogue. We got excited. Sit down, Bob, and let him tell us." Old Wardlaw forced himself back into his chair, and flourished his fan, while the fisherman proceeded.

"I was going to tell you, that every day, long before they came here, Storcks and Francesca wrote down in this book what happened. Sometimes she did it, and sometimes Major Storcks. And Lawyer, since that night when me and you was up to Friley's, I aint done much except read. I know this book by heart. I can talk it off, every word, backward. Used to sit there on my platform, pretending that I was Storcks, or Branscombe, and speakin' to myself, out of the book, until I could talk just like them. So a heap of what I'm fixin' to tell, comes right out o' here, just as Storcks wrote it, or Francesca wrote it. More'n that, I know considerable myself, by keeping both eyes open, then addin' two and two. And he told me how it happened—at the end, how he shot Storcks."

"So? You talked with the man who did the killing? Tell me—"

"We'll git to him," Hogue answered steadily. "Don't mix me up. I got it figured out, the straight dope."

Practical Bob Ruston began to get incredulous again, but Judge Wardlaw said:

"Go on, Hogue! Go on!"

"No use harkin' too far back. This squabble at Friley's got started in India, down Simla way, where Captain the Honorable Richard Branscombe met Francesca. That was the beginning of trouble for Branscombe. Before this he'd been a wild ass of a bachelor—never took anything seriously, until he went daffy over Francesca."

IF these two country lawyers had not been so exclusively absorbed in the story, they must have noticed a change in Hogue's speech. Apparently he was talking from the book, like a child reciting by rote, even us-

ing British slang with which no swamper could possibly be familiar.

"So Branscombe and Francesca were married. His family raised a deuce of a row, because one day their Richard expected to become Lord Somebody-or-other. But he didn't care a fo'penny bit about anything except that woman. They lived together two years, and then, during the summer, while Branscombe was on duty in the hot lands, he sent his wife back to that same resort in the hills, where John Storlocks saw her—the chap that wrote in this book, and got killed. Like Branscombe, Storlocks went crazy about this woman. Branscombe didn't blame him. Any chap would have run away with Francesca. It's all written down here, how they managed it."

The fisherman paused, glancing from Bob to Judge Wardlaw, as if doubting whether he could make them understand. Above his misty beard two blue eyes appealed to them for comprehension, even for sympathy, as he went on:

"Branscombe's attitude may seem incredible to Americans who have not lived in the atmosphere of India, of Capri, of Egypt. And when Branscombe thought in *English*, he seemed incredible to himself. But he wanted that woman back. Bear in mind that he was a gentleman, of good old English stock. Had his standards of what women ought to be. Nevertheless he wanted Francesca—didn't reason about it, just wanted her—still wants her."

"When news of her elopement came, he resigned from His Majesty's service, and disappeared. It made him cunning and patient—God, how patient!—like those Hindus. He understood Francesca, knew that she wanted him to want her. Francesca was that kind. Now, the dagger—"

AT this the lawyers jerked themselves more breathlessly erect.

"It was Francesca's dagger; Branscombe gave it to her one marvelous night in Benares to kill him with if he ever proved unfaithful. And Francesca could have killed him, killed him smilingly. But no crime that Francesca might commit would have induced Lancy—"

"Lancy! Lancy!" Bob and Judge Wardlaw bounded up together, exclaiming: "That was the name on the paper! Pinned to the tree!"

"Set down, Lawyers. I aim to tell that, but you keep stopping me. Set down. The girl's name was Francesca—out of a theater play. Francesca in the play had a husband named Lanciotto—she wrote it all down in this book, how Lanciotto killed his wife, and how *this* Francesca used to tease Branscombe because he wouldn't have the heart to kill her. She'd laugh at him, call him 'Lancy'—a pet name between them. We'll come to that."

"Anyhow, after Francesca eloped, Branscombe left India and set out to find her. She'd delight to have him trailing her all over the world. So one night in Venice, while she and Storlocks were gliding along the Grand Canal, another gondola brushed against theirs, a hand grappled Francesca's wrist, and two eyes glared into hers. It was Branscombe. She wrote it down in the book."

"That winter the runaways leased a houseboat on the Nile. Next to them lay an Arab felucca, loaded with shredded fiber from the palm trees. Nubian sailors were beating their drums and singing. Storlocks brought them aboard his dahabieh to make their desert music for Francesca. And when they rose to go, one tall young Arab stared at Francesca, stared until she recognized him, in his turban and his darkened face. Branscombe!"

"This happened over and over. Francesca never turned a corner in Naples, Venice, Madrid, Cairo, without half-expecting to en-

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counter Branscombe. It kept her thinking of him, more than she thought about Storcks, and speculating as to what he meant to do. Their game of hide-and-seek thrilled her; she helped Storcks to throw Branscombe off their track, because of her curiosity to see by what clever stratagem he would find them again. Eight months ago they came to Havana, where Storcks exulted at being rid of the spying husband, until one day he ordered an automobile at the Hotel Inglaterra. They took a ride along the Malecon, through the Vedado; and when Storcks dismissed his car, they discovered that their chauffeur was Branscombe. Then they slipped away from Cuba."

Again the fisherman paused—it seemed as though it was not really Hogue that was speaking—and smoked awhile with maddening unconcern before he picked up again the thread that was now so near its end.

"If it were not too long, I could explain how Storcks chanced to hear of this cabin on Darkwater, and how Branscombe followed them.

"When she first came here, Francesca was exultant and jubilant at Friley's. The novelty of it, the barbaric, primeval world appealed to such an untamed creature. It made her feel like a savage to swim in Darkwater without a bathing suit; then she'd lie on the grass where the sun beat down upon her—stretching her limbs and smiling—like a young leopardess—that's how she describes herself in the book.

"The suspense of always expecting Branscombe kept Francesca anxious, quivering, and wondering when he'd find her again. She loved that delicious shuddery feeling. Francesca's temperament could never endure ennui. She believes that a man will condone any sin by the woman who keeps her lover interested. The wife may squander a husband's fortune, or be unfaithful, and he'll crawl on hands and knees to get her back—if she doesn't bore him. In this diary Francesca has confessed her creed. Perhaps it may be true."

THE fisherman's stooping shoulders straightened, and from out the touse of his hair, his lazy blue eyes glowed with energetic fire. On and on he talked, losing the swamper's uncouth speech in the tongue of a cultured gentleman—at which the lawyers forgot to marvel.

"After he found them at Friley's, each day Captain Branscombe crept to the edge of the woods and lay there watching Francesca. Perhaps her intuitions whispered that he was near, perhaps not. At any rate, one morning she was gone. How she went, or where, Branscombe could not imagine. Storcks remained. A week, two weeks, seventeen days passed; yet the girl did not return, until Branscombe began to wonder if she'd deserted Storcks. Impossible! No man could have sat day after day under that gum tree, as John Storcks sat, reading so placidly, if Francesca had left him. He seemed quite content, unagitated, and always kept vigil upon the river, looking for Branscombe. Francesca was also sure that Branscombe would discover them. He had never failed. Perhaps she considered that Friley's remote cabin would be a suitable spot for a last meeting, and went away to let the men fight it out. I'm only guessing now, but queer notions sometimes got into Francesca's head.

"However that might be, Francesca vanished. On the seventeenth day of her absence, Branscombe felt sure that Storcks was also making ready to leave. For days he had seemed unsettled. Possibly the solitude was rasping his nerves. He stopped reading, to wander restlessly in and out of the house, or back and forth to the bluff, where he'd stand staring out over the river. Suddenly he flung up his head in that decisive way that John Storcks had. Then

he went striding back to the house. No more irresolution, no more inactivity. In the hallway he shaved off his beard, changed into a suit of gray multi, and packed his kit. Then Branscombe realized that Storcks was going to join Francesca.

"Gentlemen, it may seem unaccountable to you, that after enduring such outrage, and waiting so long, Branscombe should lose his head. But without considering what he intended to do, Branscombe stepped out from the swamp and confronted Storcks. Gossip in India whispers terrible tales about Major Storcks; yet no man ever dared hint that he knew the meaning of fear. He did not. When Branscombe first showed himself, Storcks failed to recognize him. He'd seen Branscombe as a gondolier, as an Arab sailor, as a hotel waiter in Copenhagen; and it took some few moments to identify him in a fisherman's kit.

"Well, Captain," he said quite coolly, "I am glad to see you."

"Singular as it may be, Storcks was glad, genuinely relieved, because in those last few days the intangible dread began to haunt him, that perhaps Francesca had gone back to Branscombe."

Again the fisherman stopped talking, and gazed out into the night, at the black void of Darkwater. "These men were English," he said quietly; "they did not quarrel. They didn't lie to each other. Facts must be looked squarely in the face. Both of them wanted Francesca, and realized that only one would leave that cabin. They agreed on that; and they further agreed that Francesca must be kept out of it. Very good! They arranged to shield her. Whoever lived could not hope to carry away Francesca's trunk. The survivor must travel light. So they burned everything that belonged to her in the fire that you saw."

"Evening came. The fire was dying, when Storcks said: 'Captain, we might as well finish this business.'"

"Without a word Branscombe took position at the sassafras tree, while Storcks stood against the gum, with their sunlight fairly divided. Four times Storcks fired. Branscombe fired twice. At his second shot Major John Storcks, D. S. O., of the Royal Bengals, crumpled and sank. That's all. . . .

"Now we come again to the dagger which Branscombe had given to Francesca. During the day he chanced to see Storcks slip it into his pocket. So Branscombe knew where the dagger was."

"After Storcks was finished, Branscombe had to act quickly. Your motorboat had passed along the river, and you might be drawn by the shooting. He must not risk being detained from Francesca, but had no idea where she'd gone. Of course Storcks would never have told, and Branscombe only surmised that she would write to a certain post-office box in New Orleans, where Storcks received his quarterly remittances. So to get that post-office key, Branscombe searched the body and found it; he also found this diary. Naturally he took Francesca's dagger. Then a thought struck him; he wanted Francesca to know that he had killed Storcks, wanted her to learn it in some dramatic way that would thrill her. She lived on thrills. That is why Branscombe wrote that *nom d'amour* 'Lancy' on a bit of paper and pinned it against the tree. Your American newspapers would make a sensation of it; and one morning at her breakfast, Francesca's blood must run hot as she read."

THOUGH Hogue fell silent, the eager lawyers knew that he had more to tell. "So that chapter is closed," he went on presently in a lowered voice, half to himself. "Branscombe will go to Francesca. All this time he has waited here, no matter why—and God, how patiently!—until his servant may reach New Orleans on October

tenth, with tidings. Or he may find her address in Storcks' post-office box. He may not. But he'll search the world until he finds her—and forgive her—the fool! Judge Wardlaw, when a man's a fool about a woman, and does not suspect it, there's some chance that he may wake up. But if he's a fool over a bad woman, and realizes that he's a fool, wash your hands of him and let the fool go his way."

The clubhouse porch became very still. As Hogue ceased speaking, all three men unconsciously arose, and none broke the tepid silence. A far-off owl hooted. Frogs croaked at the river's margin. A night bird flapped across the patch of lamplight. Then Wardlaw asked:

"Hogue, how did Captain Branscombe happen to confess all that to you?"

"Queer, aint it, Lawyer?" With an effort the fisherman lapsed into his accustomed dialect. "I figgers this way: a feller can't keep things locked up tight inside, forever and forever. He's got to let it out, got to. It's no satisfaction to settle a score, if nobody knows it 'cept you, and a dead man. Maybe that's why so many killers confess what they do. Branscombe wanted somebody to know. Look at this diary, what he wrote in it."

ALL this time Hogue had kept the diary in his hand, tight shut, occasionally tapping it in emphasis of a statement. Now he opened the book and turned to its last leaf. The upper writing was that of a man, down to near the middle. And there another man had written, diagonally across the page:

"The End. Branscombe."

Both lawyers stared at the significant entry, so bold, so triumphant, so full of deadly meaning. This drama which had begun in India and been played all over the world, had closed at last on Darkwater, at Friley's isolated cabin. There Branscombe had ended it, and there he had set his seal upon the final act—"The End. Branscombe."

"Look, Bob!" Judge Wardlaw's finger pointed. "That's the same handwriting as 'Lancy'—on the tree. Nobody could mistake it, the same vigorous, aggressive hand, sure in every stroke."

"Yes," Hogue nodded, "the same man wrote it, on the same day."

All seemed clear, all except one detail which puzzled old Wardlaw, and he asked:

"But Hogue, if Captain Branscombe took this diary from the dead man's body, and wrote his name on it, why then did he afterward leave the book with you?"

The pretended fisherman had not expected this question, but he answered squarely:

"Because, sir, I am Richard Branscombe."

"You? Impossible!"

Yet even as the lawyers scoffed and stared unbelievably at the man called Hogue, all his uncouthness seemed to melt away. The stooping shoulders became erect and soldierly. And in the depths of his British eyes they almost fancied that they saw the British soul, the upstanding young officer.

"Gentlemen," he queried, "you doubt that I am Captain Branscombe? Let this assure you."

He leaned over the table, took a pencil and wrote, in the same distinctive hand, a single word—"Lancy."

"There, gentlemen." He clicked his heels together and bowed. "Remember, you are my solicitors."

Then Branscombe marched away, like a guardsman on parade. The night opened to receive him. Beyond the glow of light the lawyers could see only velvet darkness. But they heard the clank of a chain at the foot of the bluff, followed by the *dip-dip-dip* of his paddle, and knew that Captain the Honorable Richard Branscombe had gone to join Francesca.

THE RACING FOOL

(Continued from page 53)

hysterical foot-races with himself along the county roads at twilight—and he would just run wildly until he fell exhausted and lay by the roadside, panting and dazed.

There was only one who seemed to understand him better than he understood himself, and on moonlight nights he crept to their rendezvous, the sweet-scented magnolia tree that marked the entrance to Diana's home. There he worshiped as reverently as though he were standing at a shrine.

In the daytimes he hated the ugly little town where nothing ever happened. But at night, when the shadows brought their veil of illusion, a strange exaltation came to him, and he sought Diana's home, a rural *Romeo* babbling incoherent verses to a village *Juliet*.

The time came when the wild obsession to run beyond the limits of a country road became too strong to resist. All of a tremble, he sought his sweetheart one night, and pleaded passionately that she embark with him upon the Great Adventure.

And Diana kissed him on the forehead and regarded him with tear-filled, comprehending eyes, the while she shook her head and bade him go forth alone.

"Not that I don't love you, dear," she told him. "I do, and oh, so well! But this would be foolish and wrong, very wrong. For one thing, it would kill my father; and for another, I am afraid—afraid for both of us."

"Why?" he demanded.

Diana shook her head, plucking thoughtfully at the leaves of a magnolia blossom. "Life isn't all moonlight, Tommy. A man's place is in the sun, and you won't be happy—won't really understand yourself—until you've gone out alone into the big world and fought and won. That's what you need now, dear, more than you need the moonlight and me! You want glory, action and the respect and admiration of even your home town. Go away, Tommy—I know you have to go; and sometime Calora and I will both be proud to welcome you back. Good-by, dear, and God's luck!"

Their lips met for the first time, and the vision that he bore away with him, as he trudged down the dark aisle of sycamores, was Diana waving farewell in the moonlight.

It took Tom Meredith three years to find himself, three years of aimless hand-to-mouth existence, a fugitive vagabond seeking he knew not what!

Somehow the word drifted back to Calora that he was dead—and in time Diana came to accept this as the only possible explanation of why he had not written. Hers had been a dream romance, as fragile and mysterious as the moonlight—something to be locked away in her heart and memory, and guarded from the world of cruel realities. She preferred to think of him as dead, rather than faithless to the trust she had imposed.

He might well have died, but for the prank of Fate that snatched him from the darkness. The famous "desert classic" was being run in those days—the Los Angeles to Phoenix road-race—a nineteen-hour duel against time and the obstacles of nature. Halfway on the route, and named as a checking-station, was the tiny desert town in which Tom Meredith was stranded. He was among the station loiterers when Jacques Fournoy, the Flying Frenchman, came flashing up at dusk in the Golden Submarine, one side of the car crushed flat, and his mechanic unconscious from the pain of a broken arm. The officials had made no provision for substitute mechanics, and they said so. But the great Frenchman's blood was up. "What I care for mechanic!" he roared. "Give me some damn fool to pump oil and look back, and I get ze hell out of here!"



Whispers, Whispers— how much misery they have caused!

By ETHEL K. BANNISTER, Graduate Nurse

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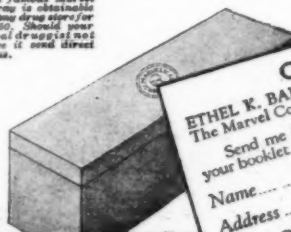
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Destiny took young Meredith by the shoulder and shoved him forward. He said nothing, but climbed in beside the Frenchman, who pounded him on the back, and shouted: "*Bien!* Now we win or we die, and I don't give a damn which! *Allons!*"

They departed in a cloud of dust, just as the nearest pursuer rolled in behind them. What a ride! Moon and the stars and the rush of the night-wind on the desert! An exhilaration of soul under speed such as the dreaming vagabond of Calora had never conceived. Mercurial monarchs they were, conquering time and distance, as they thundered through the night toward dawn and victory! Covered with dust and oil and glory, they rolled into Phoenix to find the gathered thousands awaiting them, and the checkered flag displayed in their honor.

"What I tell you?" said Fournoy. "The damn-fool race—she is ours! Now, my young friend, we have time to get acquainted! By gar, you bring me luck!"

Looking into the eyes of the gallant Frenchman, and grasping the hand that was extended, young Meredith dedicated himself at that moment to Hermes, God of Speed.

He rode with Fournoy, absorbing all the daring Frenchman's methods, until the day came when they overturned during the Grand Prix in France, and Fournoy, hopelessly crushed under the driving-wheel, whispered to him: "*Adieu, mon brave! Play ze damn game, and I hope you be luckier zan I!*"

Not long afterward Meredith returned to America, established connections with the famous Butterfly team, and eventually drove his first winning race. Not until then did he break the long silence that had marked the passing years. In a delicious moment of self-justification he scissored all the clippings and mailed them to Diana, the one person in all the world who he felt would understand.

Back came a letter full of sympathy and encouragement, and the praise for which he hungered. He fancied that certain lines were tear-stained, and he wondered why—wondered until he read the clipping she had inclosed, a faded item from the Calora *Sun* that described with all the fulsome adjectives of country journalism the marriage of Diana Davis and "our esteemed fellow-townsmen, Peter Pringley, cashier of the Calora Bank."

So her father had had his way after all! Peter Pringley—bumptious, upright, unimaginative Peter Pringley—with no more sense of romance in him than a clam! Tom Meredith could picture the tragedy as clearly as though he had been an eyewitness. Diana immolating herself on the altar of filial obedience; Peter Pringley smirking self-consciously under the gross gibes of the village wits.

It was shortly thereafter that Wild Tom Meredith rose to fame as the Black Ghost of the speedways—the romantic, picturesque idol of fandom who could always be counted on to give a thrill-eager public its money's worth. He had been at it a decade now—straining his luck in a ten-year gamble with Death. And the winning of the Knickerbocker Cup Race had placed almost within his grasp the triple-A, crown-symbol of sovereignty on the speedways of America. He needed but one more victory to establish him as the king!

Now you begin to understand what the moonlight meant to Meredith, and what was

in the heart of Diana, three thousand miles away, when she inspired the little town of Calora to awaken from its Rip Van Winkle slumber, convert the old racetrack into a motor-drome, and summon back for public homage the man she had bade, as a boy, go forth alone.

AFTER all, there is an ebb and flow in the tide of human affairs and small towns. There was nothing illogical in the fact that Calora, slowest of communities, should undertake to build the fastest track ever constructed. Remember that this drowsy village had once known the glory of sporting blood—none better!

Wally King took all the credit for the idea, but it was Diana who brought the promoter into town, and told him the history of Calora, and pointed out that it was only thirty miles removed from a population of a million souls. King was a builder of speedways, as much a champion in his line as was Wild Tom Meredith when it came to dedicating the boarded bowls that Wally built. The famous constructor came to Calora unheralded, very immaculate, very red of face, and sporting the derby hat, the cane and the silk kerchief by which the sporting world identified him.

He climbed the nearest foothill for a bird's-eye view of the valley, took one look at the abandoned track, the huge stands, the railroad lines in the foreground, the State highway in the distance; and he felt like Balboa discovering the Pacific. When he learned that this was Wild Tom Meredith's home town, the matter was settled there and then.

Five nights later, at the wildest town meeting since Trustee Daniels broke the water-pitcher over the town marshal's head, the Calora Speedway Association was formed. But the final resolution was not achieved until they had taken old Jud Higginbotham, the town skinflint and pessimist, and chucked him into the middle of the street with a whoop and hurrah! There he stayed, baying at them from the darkness:

"Durn fools, you're all drunk! That's what y'are—*drunk!* Mark my words, we'll be busted higher'n a kite! Set this town back forty years!"

"Well, we aint gone *ahead* in forty years," said Trustee Smith. "So what's the difference, you damned old bullfrog?"

It remained for Diana to heal old Jud's bitterness and reconcile all factions under the slogan: "Watch Calora Grow!" It was she who attended to all the preliminary correspondence, who shouldered all the worry and responsibility in connection with an event of that kind, and who finally—when no more funds were available—put up every cent she had to meet the exorbitant demands of Meredith's own manager.

Of these new angles to a home-town drama Wild Tom Meredith had not yet learned. Langfield, who made all the bookings for the Butterfly team, had gone on to the Coast ahead of the drivers, as was his custom, and had contracted for their appearance over the winter circuit. The cars were shipped ahead, accompanied by the mechanics, and the drivers followed, a group of merry adventurers, some of them with their families, and all enjoying the luxury of a private Pullman. Not until they reached San Francisco, did Meredith learn that the opening date at Tanforan had been abandoned, and that he was now scheduled to appear in the little town that had once scorned him as the son of "Dan the drunkard."

At first he thought this was one of Hans Wanser's clumsy attempts at humor

Some one must have tipped the Dutchman off to what had always been a closely guarded secret in the bosom of the wild man of the speedways.

But no! The papers were already full of it. The town was plastered with signs advertising the "fastest track on earth." The furnace of publicity was going full blast. Calora had tipped its hand to the press-agents, claimed Wild Tom Meredith as its very own, and was capitalizing native sentiment for all it was worth.

"Come to Calora!" shrieked the billboards. "Turn out for Wild Tom, and watch the Black Ghost go!"

A tremendous feeling of revulsion swept over the King of Speed. This wretched little town that had wronged him so bitterly in his youth, this hamlet of moonlight and mixed memories and the unhonored grave of his father, had no right now to summon him back and coin money out of his weary flesh and blood. Not for this had he sought a place in the sun!

"Cancel my entry," he told Langfield. "I won't drive at Calora."

The team manager turned purple. "Wha-d'ye mean, you won't drive? You've got to! I demanded five thousand as appearance money, and I got it!"

"Well, give it back."

"Like hell I will!" said Langfield. "What are you tryin' to pull?"

But Meredith simply shook his head, and remained silent. Blubber Doyle took the team manager aside and showed him a pocket calendar marked with red ink. "It's the moon," said Blubber. "The old full moon is doin' its stuff, and he aint responsible. Don't try to argue with him now. Leave him to me; I know how to handle him. Don't worry. He'll be all right in a day or two."

"Well, he'd better snap out of it quick," said Langfield. "The race is a week from Saturday."

THE other drivers took up their quarters in Calora at once in order to tune up their cars and get the benefit of a few days' trial on the new track. But Meredith held out until the last moment, and then it was only the entreaties of the fat philosopher of the pits, backed by young Cheever, the mechanic, that induced the Black Ghost to reconsider his decision.

"I don't know what's in your mind," said Blubber, "and maybe it aint none of my business; but you've always shot square with the public, Tom, and I hate to see you make a mistake now. Cheever and me were up in Calora yesterday. —Weren't we, kid?"

"Sure were!" said Cheever. "I never see a town so jazzed up. Game lil' burg, and it's sure gone for the works. Busted flat and dizzy, but happy as hell! Aint twenty spare beds in the town, and there'll be seventy-five thousand people there. Even that wont pull 'em out!"

"You're tellin' the story now," said Blubber. "What with the new track, the purses, the lap-prizes and the appearance dough, they're overboard two hundred thousand bucks, and where they ever got it, I don't know. Must be sportin' blood in the town somewhere. Nobody's squawkin'. They've got their money posted, and they're just waitin' for the Pride of Calora to show up, so they can tear the town up by the roots and hand it over. What say, Tom? Shall I phone 'em that we're on our way?"

Meredith stared out the window of his hotel room, and the scales of Destiny wavered in the balance. Blubber slid an arm around the wild man's shoulders. "You're forgettin' something, old pal," he reminded gently. "There's a code in this business like in any other. You're the champion and the drawing-card, and if you break contracts and disappoint the public, you'll only hurt

"HEAVEN BENT!" That's the speed of life and love in a great story to appear in an early issue. It's the title of the tale as well—the story of a rain-making kid and a honky-tonk girl on the Mexican border. And it's by—
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the game and make it harder for your pals to earn a living."

Meredith sighed and turned away from the window. "Go ahead and phone," he directed. "I'll give 'em all I've got."

Young Cheever let out a whoop of joy. "Now, I'll tell you something," he exploded. "The old Butterfly's over there and all tuned up. I took a chance and shipped it three days ago. What's more, I had her on the track yesterday. —Didn't I, Blubber?"

The fat man grinned. "I'll say you did, and I was sayin' my prayers. Tom, that's the best track Wally has turned out yet. Mile and a quarter, and built like a bathtub, with a thirty-eight-degree slope on the curves."

"I had to do better than eighty to stay up on it," said Cheever, "but the approaches are so gradual that no engine efficiency is lost. The tachometer showed a variation of only twenty-five revolutions a-lap. Tom, old champ, if we ever get out in front, they'll have to do better than a hundred and thirty-five an hour to catch us!"

Meredith smiled at young Cheever's enthusiasm, recalling the days when he himself had been an eager novice, thirsting only for speed—and still more speed!

SO the Black Ghost answered the call of Calora, and never had he felt more like a disembodied spirit—some helpless shadow from the afterworld dragged back unwillingly to the haunts of childhood, and seeing and comprehending things to which all others were blind. Calora had changed so little, and so much had happened to him!

The program of entertainment differed but slightly from that to which he was accustomed—the same routine of receptions, street-parades, interviews and photographs, the same "official banquet," during the course of which he sat toying with his food and listening dully to the same old empty compliments, bombastic speeches and small-town wit. He achieved self-control with difficulty and during a lull in the dinner found courage to ask a question of the man at his left.

"What's that?" said the other. "Peter Pringley? Oh, Peter's dead. Must be all of six years now. Widow's had rather a hard time, what with the little boy and nursing her father. Old Doctor's gettin' pretty feeble. Reckon that's why she aint here tonight. Did you know Diana?"

The wild man of the speedways nodded quietly. A moment later he arose, whispered his apologies to the toastmaster, and quietly left the banquet-room.

Blubber Doyle whispered to Cheever: "Thank God, the old boy's going to hit the hay early. He's sure got his work cut out for him tomorrow. Chet Gibson and the Swede—"

"I know," whispered Cheever. "I heard all about it. They're going to try and run his wheels off. But the man we've got to watch is De Pulva. The Wop is going out for it; and take it from me—that bird can drive when the money's up. This race is going to be won in the pits."

"Well," said Blubber, "all you have to do is loop your arms and come in. I'll change all four wheels in twenty seconds."

"Yes, you will!"

"Yes, I will!" said Blubber. "You wait and see!" But for once the fat man was wrong, for Wild Tom Meredith was destined never to come into the pits again. It was De Pulva's tires that were to be changed on the morrow in world's-record time!

Outside, in the darkness, the speed-hero of America skirted Calora's single street, now noisy and illumined, and found his way to the familiar lane of sycamores that had been his "aisle of adoration" as a boy. The years fell from him, and again he was a village vagabond seeking the shrine of the



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only one who would understand. The moon was in its last quarter. Nothing much had changed: the same moon, the same shrill call of crickets, and all the music of nature in the night. And there was Diana, the same Diana, waiting for him at the spot from which she had waved good-by long years ago.

"Tom, dear!"
"Diana!"

What a story they had to tell, there in the moonlight—this man who had won his spot in the fierce sunlight of the world and been shriveled by it, and this girl who had spent her years in the little town where nothing ever happened!

Small wonder that there seemed to be a wall between them against which Meredith's dream beat its wings in vain. When the narrative was over, he pleaded impetuously, with all the suppressed longing pent up by passing years; and Diana, white and wistful and troubled, was afraid of such happiness—afraid because their positions were now transposed. He was no longer the persecuted son of the village drunkard, creeping to her for consolation, but a public idol—the speed prince of America about to be crowned the king!

And how was she to know the mysteries of publicity, the inventive power of the press-agent? How was she to reconcile the gilded hero of a hundred fictitious tales with the man for whom her heart had always yearned? She answered him as she had answered once before:

"It isn't that I don't love you, Tom. I've lived for this hour, prayed for it! I've followed your career from the time you sent me the first clipping. Nothing was ever published that I didn't read, and reread and keep. I've dreamed of the time when Calora would call you back, so that I could witness your triumph, and I've also dreamed of this moment, of you and me in the moonlight again. That's the trouble, Tom: I'm afraid you're dreaming now as well as I. It's the night and memories that are talking now. Your place is in the sun, and mine is in the moonlight, and the two don't shine together. . . . Good-by, Tom—and God's luck tomorrow!"

He treasured her hand a moment, dropped it, and turned away—a gaunt, lonely figure fading into the shadows and murmuring under his breath: "God's luck! . . . God's luck! My God, what for?"

IMAGINE the crowded stands fronting a great wooden saucer around which steel dragon-flies guided by hooded humans were due to sing their way a hundred and twenty times, flashing past so swiftly that only the trained eye could check the numbers.

All the usual color was there: the odor of castor oil, the popping of valves, the bark of exhausts, the musicians blowing brass, noise and confusion everywhere—press photographers getting in each other's way, motion-picture men faking scenes before the race, the familiar arguments between timers and checkers, the usual expulsion of gate-crashers from the press-box, announcers bawling to the crowd not to pay more than ten cents for drinks. The hot-dog man shouting: "They look like chicken and they taste like turkey! My, oh my!"

Tire and factory representatives were advertising their products in the pits; the magnavox was making tin-panny announcement of last-minute changes, and nobody paying any attention; Dick Wagner, czar of the speedways, was lining them in for rows, with the pace-setter in front on the pole; and finally came the pistol-shot that set the torpedo fleet in motion!

Four times they circled the track, maneuvering into position, while the pace grew faster and faster. The next time around, the gaps began to close. Those in Group

Two stepped on it and moved up toward the leaders. They swung into the turn and came down the stretch, eighteen cars in a thundering mass of straining steel. Down went the red flag, and the race was on!

THE vast crowd had not long to wait for thrills. The actual start was a wild enough affair, with Johnny Cowper in the Blue Penguin trying to take the pole away from De Pulva, and being forced to slow up so suddenly that he nearly bowled over a dozen cars. "Smiling Jack" Tillman, driving his first race on a board track, misjudged his distance on the far turn, lost control and crashed against the top rail. The car slewed around and hung there—a tangled mass pinned in place by the front wheels, and dripping oil and gasoline in the path of the other drivers. There was no time to marvel at Tillman and his mechanic climbing out, apparently unhurt. That thin stream of oil, trickling from the wreck above, was bringing new thrills at the rate of two a minute.

The crowd stood up, gasping—expecting every time the field flashed up to that grease-soaked curve that Death would demand its grim percentage. But the drivers were fighting for their lives now, cool, experienced men with superb nerves and skill. They skidded but kept wide of one another, and retained control. Presently the flow of oil was checked, and dirt was used to obliterate the danger-line. The crowd breathed easier, and sat down to await the next development.

This came when the usual mechanical troubles began to manifest themselves, and the field was gradually reduced to a dozen strict contenders. The terrific pace had wrought havoc with the valves. Stillman, at the wheel of a Black Butterfly, threw a valve in the twenty-second lap. Thornton, the second of Wild Tom's teammates, smashed another valve, and the crowd groaned as he went to the pits. The Blue Penguin was throwing a smoke-screen that endangered the cars behind, and the white flag was used to order it off the track.

The process of elimination went on up to the fiftieth lap, and then nine cars, all piloted by experienced drivers, settled down to the real struggle: the heartbreaking, nerve-twisting grind that tests the temperament of men and machines.

To every sport, its peculiar human angle. There is this about motor-racing: In no other game does the subconscious express itself so strongly. Some men sob all through a race; others curse continuously from the fall of the first flag to the last. Emotion of some sort rules them all, and is reflected in a physical way. And because the purr of a man's engine is like the breath of his life, cars become attuned to the spirit of the men who drive them. They reflect the temperament of their masters.

Hans Wanser's imported Special was grinding along in its stubborn Dutch way—ponderous, determined, unimaginative. The fiery Italian was shooting out recklessly in front, burning up his tires, and paying for it with lightning visits to the pits. Swanson, the "Savage Swede," fought his car as usual, punishing it on the curves with vicious flips of the wheel during which the rear wheels hit for the sky and were pulled down like the heels of a startled horse. Chet Gibson, cool and calculating,—reckoned a "safety" driver,—was setting his own pace, without regard to the others. And as usual, the procession of comets was being led at this stage of the race by the French Beau Brummel, Marcel Leroux, always a popular figure with the crowd, but seldom in the money at the finish. Marcel's dashing temperament couldn't stand more than a hundred miles of dueling; neither could his car. They always cracked under the final pressure.

But it was not for these men that a little town had mortgaged its municipal soul. Nor for these men that seventy-five thousand people had assembled, among them a girl who, white-lipped and trembling, comprehended for the first time the fearful peril of the glory-seekers. All eyes—including those of Diana—were watching a black car with a white "9"—snub-nosed and ominous, and guided by the king of them all, Wild Tom Meredith.

The crowd was strangely silent, for the Racing Fool of the speedways had not yet fulfilled the demand upon him. Not once had he taken the lead; not once had he brought the crowd to its feet, shouting his name. The Black Butterfly, sole remaining hope of the factory, was lagging in the rear, apparently unable to wing its way to the front. It too was reflecting the mood of its master.

From the very start of the race Meredith's subconscious mind had succumbed to a shadow. Whether it was really a premonition of what lay ahead, or depression due to what lay behind, is a matter for psychologists to determine. Meredith only sensed that this was to be his last race, and exactly as though he were drowning, the events of his life were reenacted photographically on the sensitive film of his subconscious mind. His body was an automaton, hands on the wheel, eyes on the track, and the wind whistling wickedly in his face; but his inner consciousness was occupied with long-forgotten incidents, and their portrayal fascinated him.

Life after all is best seen in perspective; therefore the past has its unflinching charm. He understood things now that he had never comprehended before. Bitterness went out of his heart, and he felt more kindly toward this little town; he saw it in a new light—even grew to love it. Why, it was his home town, his birthplace—the spot where Diana had first seen the light of dawn, had comforted him in his sorrows and kissed awake his courage. And now Calora, shaking off the lethargy of forty years, had called him back as its honored son—called him back to help start a new era in the town's development.

Suddenly the drama of it all hit him full force, snapping the bonds of emotional restraint. Diana—the triple-A crown—the glory of Calora—the vindication of his name and birth! They were all emotional impulses that shocked him into consciousness. This was *his day*, and nothing should rob him of it—nothing!

The cars were roaring down the backstretch in the ninetieth lap. In the pits, Blubber Doyle, watching through field-glasses, suddenly emitted a war-whoop and flung his cap into the air. "There he goes!" he shrieked. "Go get 'em, Meredith! Go on, you wild man! Ya-hoo-o-o!"

THE moment had come for which the packed stands had been waiting, and the crowd responded now as one man, erect and vociferous. Meredith was "stepping on it," and they understood at last why he was called the Black Ghost. They had never seen such speed, such driving! The black car had become a blurred shadow that was rapidly overhauling the field.

It was a phantom butterfly that gained on the swishing leaders, caught them, and then began to flit through in a figure "8"—weaving back and forth at a hundred and thirty-five miles an hour, and never clicking a hub-cap. On the hundredth lap he did it again, and this time went into the actual lead, taking the pole and skimming out in front, a reckless son of Hermes, piloting a black destroyer of space and time.

In the pits the mechanics were holding up blackboards chalked with huge white signals "G-9"—"G-9"—"G-9." That meant: "Get Number Nine!" "Get Meredith."

In a race where men were dropping out and reëntering, it was hard to keep track of who was actually in the lead. The drivers nodded now as they thundered past. They understood that the Black Ghost was in front, and they set out to drag him down.

Remember that not once had Meredith gone into the pits for a tire-change. De Pulva had renewed all four wheels on the eightieth lap, and now he was driving like a demon, the nearest man to the leader. If Meredith stopped now, the race was lost, with all that it meant!

Wild Tom was the first to see it—a thin white streak showing in the left front tire. And the streak widened as he watched!

So, that was it! Death had flung down its challenge. Fate had uncovered its trump card! Destiny was daring him to go on! Well, so be it! His jaw-muscles bulged, and he forgot everything but the blind lust to win.

He roared past the shouting stands, and the green flag signaled: "One more lap to go!" He was blind to Blubber Doyle, waving frantically from the pits, blind to everything but the spreading white streak in that tire. He felt only the pressure of a mechanic's arm around his shoulders, heard only the voice of young Cheever shouting frantically into his ear: "De Pulva! De Pulva! De Pulva!"

By that cry he knew that the Italian was at his heels. Down went his foot, and the Black Butterfly became a singing comet scorching its way along a boarded skyline!

And there was the goal at last! Tired, straining eyes recognized the finish—tumult—dark crowded stands that rushed to meet him—the figure of Wagner crouched on the sideline with the checkered flag that means: "You have won!"

Fifty car-lengths—twenty—ten! Nothing could beat him now. He had kept the faith! Flash of blinding black, fall of checkered flag as he passed the line, and then—bang! The left front tire exploded, and the Black Butterfly swerved in its flight, plunged, spun twice around—appeared to hesitate—

Even with the swiftness of the blow, Meredith's mind reacted instantly, obeying the training of years. He thought of the young mechanic at his side, thought of his comrades behind him, and with all his skill he struggled to save them. He guided the car in its last struggle so that when it did turn over, and he was pinned beneath it, young Cheever was thrown clear, and the wreck was out of the path of those behind. Then the sun went out, and he floated off into the moonlight that he loved. . . .

NO, he did not die. "God's luck" had ridden with him.

He realized it when the fractured skull had mended, and he discovered that he was in Diana's home, and that it was she who had nursed him back to life.

News of his return to consciousness spread through the village, and to his bedside they came to pay their tribute—even old Jud Higginbotham, the town pessimist and skin-flint.

"We're all for you!" said Jud. "Durn tootin'! If you hadn't already won all the money in the damn' town, I'd buy you a new car myself."

"Oh, but he isn't going to race any more," protested Diana. "I've made him promise that."

"Aint gonna drive?" said Jud. "What's he gonna do?"

"He's going to open up a garage here," said Diana, "and—and, well—you better ask him what else he's going to do."

Wild Tom Meredith reached out for Diana's hand. "That's it, Jud," he declared. "I've won the old race, and now I'm going to stay right here, and Watch Calora grow!"

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